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Thoughts Verses and Songs

BY

CLARIBEL

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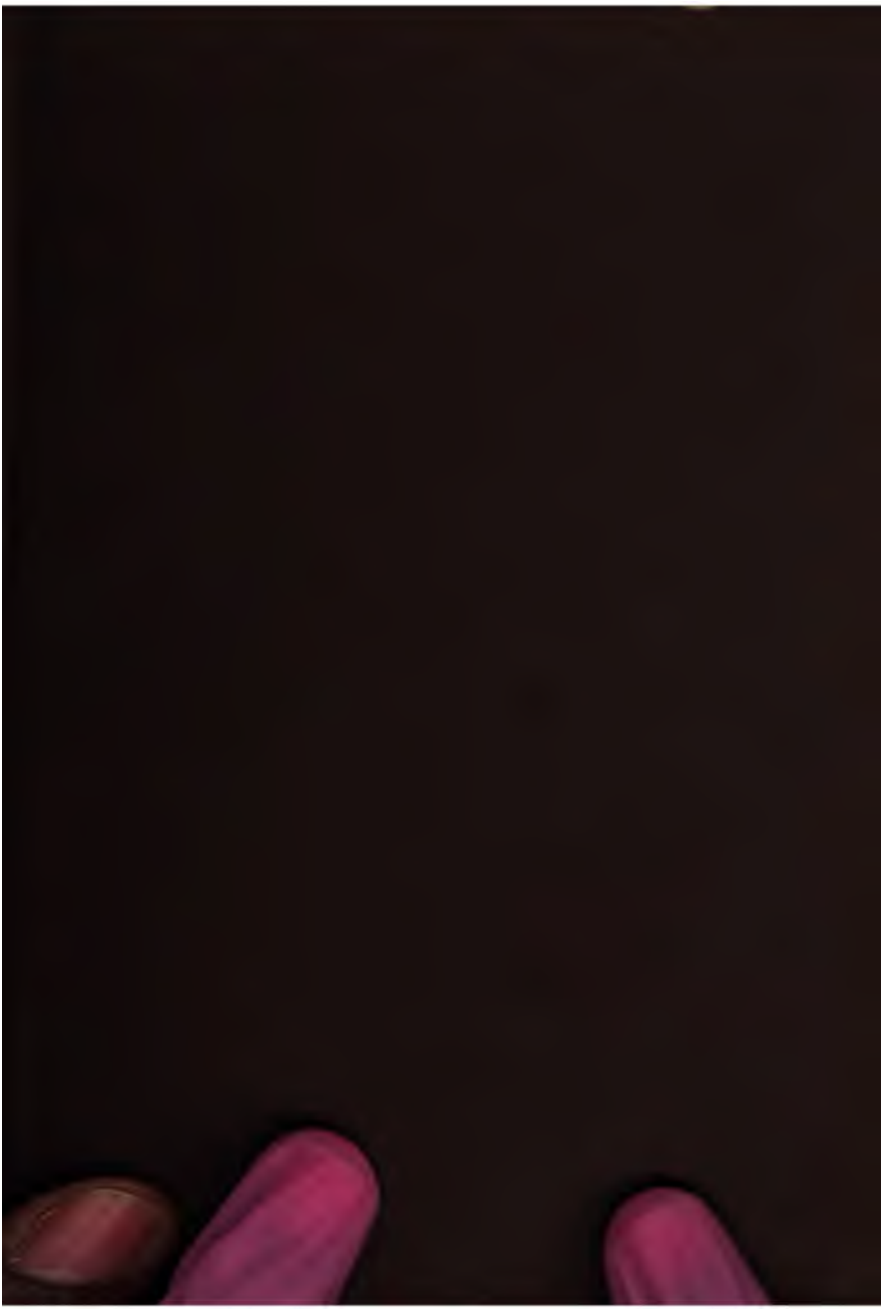

THOUGHTS VERSES AND SONGS

MURRAY AND GIBB, EDINBURGH,
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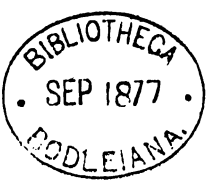
THOUGHTS

VERSES AND SONGS

BY CLARIBEL



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1877

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280 . o . 146.

OUT OF THE RANKS, TILL ALL RISE UP
FOR THE MUSTER-ROLL OF THAT FAR-OFF SHORE ;
WHERE EACH SHALL BE KNOWN, AS EACH SHALL BE JUDGED,
BY THE STANDARD OF TRUTH, FOR EVERMORE.

GRATEFULLY MINDFUL

OF MANY YEARS OF HIS LOVE,

I DEDICATE THESE TRIFLES

TO

MY HUSBAND.

MANY PIECES HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED ARE NOW ADDED, BUT WITH AS FEW ALTERATIONS AS POSSIBLE; NOT MORE THAN WERE NEEDFUL FROM THE OBVIOUSLY UNFINISHED STATE IN WHICH SOME OF THEM WERE FOUND.

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THOUGHTS, VERSES, AND SONGS.

Guide Posts.

looking at one this moment from my window,
ıs I see it in the distance, I am reading what
ys in imagination, for I know it so well,—'To
ıer.'

ere it stands always. I cannot explain what
liar attraction it has for me, but it undeniably
ın attraction; and the first thing I fix my eyes
. when I look out, is seldom the garden or the
but the far-off guide post. I am certain that,
were blown down, I should be the first to dis-
r its loss. I have often begun by looking at it
n. ıanically, and ended by finding myself in a train of fantastic thought. To-day especially it has led me into thinking of *animated* guide posts. I know

of one or two in this world who are as firm and unvarying and disinterested in pointing out the way to me as my gaunt friend on the Limber Road. Single-hearted and simple themselves, they ever point forward and onward by their bright example; and never, in the course of my knowledge and love of them, have they pointed to any but the *one* way.

The Bells' Whisper.

THE roses were twining as once in old times,
The birds singing still in the larches and limes,—
The same, yet how sad and how silent the spells!
No need for the whispers we heard in the bells,
As, tenderly floating o'er upland and hill,
Their chimes broke the silence and echoed at will,
As, wafted across o'er the hedges of may,
'Remember, remember!' the bells seemed to say.

No need, for our hearts were too full of the past,
Of earth and earth's visions too lovely to last;
The dreams and enjoyments of merry lang syne
Were once more before us; we dared not repine;
Though earth's brightest roses had withered and fled,
And tears fell in silence for days that were dead,
As, wafted across o'er the hedges of may,
'Remember, remember!' the bells seemed to say.

But while on earth's visions too fondly we dwell,
Methought that the whisper that came from the bell
Should not be for days that are long left behind,—
And a far deeper meaning came home to my mind;
For surely they chime in the voice of a friend,
'Beyond all earth's troubles remember the *end*;'
As, wafted across o'er the hedges of may,
'Remember, remember!' the bells seemed to say.

The Late Swallow.

SPRING is passing, wand'ring swallow;
We can see thy last year's nest,
Hidden by the climbing rose tree,
'Neath the eaves thou lovest best.
Soon the roses will be budding,
April days are on the wane,
And we miss thy cheerful twitter:
Swallow, swallow, come again!

Blackthorn hedges are in blossom,
Orchards flushed with rosy bloom,
All the sallows silver tinted,
And the latest cuckoo come;
All the woods with songs are ringing,
Larks are warbling o'er the plain,
All the little streamlets singing:
Swallow, swallow, come again!

Dost thou know the lime is budding,
Welcomed by the merry bees,
And a thousand voices calling,
'Come across the summer seas'?
Swiftly speed thee, fair winds lead thee,
O'er the blue waves of the main,
To the eaves behind the roses:
Swallow, swallow, come again!

Cheerfulness.

I THINK we have all a great deal to answer for in the way we use our influence. How few of us, when we are inclined to be mopy and dreary, realize the fact that we are thus becoming intense bores to those around us! Yet so it is. For the mopes, like the measles, are catching; and when in these moods we inflict ourselves upon our friends, we only make their burdens the heavier by attracting special attention to our own. We all have our burdens. 'To each his suffering,' says one observant writer; while another assures us that in every house there is a skeleton in the cupboard. And yet, if we acknowledge this fact cheerfully, we make it all the easier to be endured.

Oh, the blessing of a 'cheerful countenance'! To some persons it is constitutional to moan and groan; and to others to laugh and sing. Happy they who are so blessed as to carry sunshine with them

wherever they go! I know of one or two such natures, and they do me more good in half an hour than the best being in the world with a melancholy mind can do me in half a year.

'A merry heart doeth good like a medicine, but a broken spirit drieth the bones.'

Lowland Mary.

THE sun was setting o'er the hill,
And gilding all the fern,
When lowland Mary from the mill
Came wandering by the burn.
And 'sun-down's fair,' say I to her;
'Ay, sun-down's fair,' saith she;
And dancing down the mountain-side
The burn ran merrily.

The mavis sang her evening song,
The moorland blooms were sweet,
The west wind shook the hawthorn buds
And laid them at our feet.
'I'm lonely oft,' I say to her;
'I'm lonely oft,' saith she;
And dancing down the mountain-side
The burn ran merrily.

'I have a heart to give to thee;'
'And I to thee,' saith she;
'Then take my troth,' say I to her;
'And take my troth,' saith she.
And when the may-buds flowered again,
To kirk sae blithe went we,
And lowland Mary's all my own;
The burn sings merrily.

Dreaming.

THIS is a most dangerous delight, and one to be avoided resolutely.

I do not mean dreams during sleep, which we cannot help, but dreams of the day-time, in which some of us too freely indulge, and which do not leave us where they found us, but farther away from hope and happiness,—farther away from rest and peace,—and farther away from contentment and thankfulness for the many blessings with which we are surrounded. Day-dreams are a fatal enjoyment, and should be avoided as a deadly poison. You are sitting alone by the fire; your book has dropped upon your knee; your eye is fixed on vacancy, while your thoughts have gone careering away thoroughly out of your own control, conjuring up gorgeous visions of happiness that are not of this world, and only filling your fancy with vague yearnings for the unattainable which can

never be satisfied. No! believe me, this is not the mode by which your powers of endurance will be strengthened to bear the buffets of fortune, or your mental qualities invigorated to grapple with the realities of life.

Waiting.

I DREAMED, when I was yet a child,
Of girlhood's grand estate;
In ecstasy of hope and joy,
I waited at the gate.

I dreamed, when I was yet a girl,
Of woman's happier fate;
With eager hope and yearning heart,
I waited at the gate.

The woman woke with saddened heart,
For, dreams of earlier date
Had proved but dreams, and happiness
Was still within the gate.

But now I know—I know at last,
A lesson learned of late;
For heaven I yearned unconsciously,
In waiting at the gate.

Blind Alice.

THEY tell me that the skies are blue,
And flowers are all in bloom;
Fresh cowslips they have brought to-day,
To deck my little room.
I cannot see them as they grow
Amid the meadow grass,
But I can feel them at my feet,
And pluck them as I pass.

The winter days were long and drear,
And very sad to me;
No blackbirds warbled in the thorn,
No thrush from o'er the lea.
I thought how once my heart rejoiced
To hear their cheering strain;
I longed for summer-time to bring
Those friendly birds again.

And yet I had my pleasant hours,
For Ellie was so kind;
She read to me until I half
Forgot that I was blind.
To dry my tears, she bade me think
That I one day should *see;*
Where in eternal summer-time
The angels wait for me.

The Early Primrose.

I SAT alone, my spinning done,
The yellow leaves danced in the sun,
And plaintively the western breeze
Made mournful music in the trees.
It woo'd me out into the wood,
For I was in a restless mood;
'And there,' methought, 'I shall be free,
Where none will care to follow me.'

With many a branch the path was strewn,
By moss and lichen overgrown,
And rime-frost silvered every blade
That grew beneath the sullen shade.
I felt it sad, I knew not why,
That all these leaves should fall and die,
When suddenly in this retreat
A primrose star shone at my feet.

It smiled so freshly in my way,
It chased all gloomy thoughts away;
For e'en in nature's darkest hour
She boasts, perchance, some little flower;
And sure, when saddest hours do fall,
There is a primrose for us all,
To make our hearts rejoice and sing
With promise of eternal spring.

Blackbirds.

I SHALL doubtless be set down as a person sadly deficient in taste, when I assert that I prefer the blackbird's song to that of the nightingale. The one delights, soothes, and calms me; the other astonishes, excites, and finally rather wearies me. The strain of the nightingale has so little repose. The melody is in such a hurry. There is so much of jerkiness, of question and answer, of cheerfulness and bustle about it all. The blackbird's song, on the contrary, always strikes me as a sad, sweet, spiritual warble, which is either a lament or a love song, as the hearer's fancy may make it. So mellow, so rich and melodious are the tones, I am quite incapable of praising them in the way in which I feel them. But perhaps, after all, my peculiar love of the blackbird's note is due not so much to its intrinsic excellence, as to a mental association by which I connect it with April days that can never return.

The Blackbird's Song.

When wind-flowers hang their simple heads,
And daffodils are gay,
When primrose buds begin to peep,
To greet the genial day;
Low warbling notes, at eventide,
Forgotten visions bring:
Who has not felt a vague regret
When first the blackbirds sing?

The old times, rosy in love's light,
We see in dreams again,
And many a day long passed away
Has memory in her train.
The hopes and fears of other years,
Long fled on weary wing,
Come crowding o'er the mind once more,
When first the blackbirds sing.

And yet, we would not know again,
Or seek to own once more,
The wayward hearts, the wayward wills,
We knew so well of yore;
For life to us has grown to be
A higher, holier thing,
And now we hear the promise clear
When first the blackbirds sing.

Corks.

I ONCE heard a most amusing description given of character, namely, that so and so 'was born a cork.' I have often thought since what an excellent idea it was. The cork may be swamped, but it will rise over and over again and be none the worse. Such is certainly the case with some natures: they were born 'corks.' We are not all of us corks. In the current of life we cannot all rise again in a hurry if we are once thrust well under water; and the things done and said to the individual who has had the fortune to be 'born a cork,' would afflict some of us to our heart's core. To be sure, the cork may be put down by a strong hand, but in an incredibly short space of time it is afloat again. I think we might, perhaps, by cultivation, become cork-like, but it is very hard work; and I doubt whether any one could *entirely* acquire the cool self-possession and indifference to rebuffs that characterize the '*born* cork.'

False and Fair.

I CAST my rose on the waters clear,
A rose I have treasured full many a year;
I find her false, and I thought her true,
She gave me the rose as she bid me adieu;
'Twas torn from the braids of her amber hair:
Oh, how so false and yet so fair!

Dry and withered its leaflets now,
'Tis an emblem meet of my love, I trow:
'Tis dead, and I scatter its relics away,
The river can take it wherever it may,
And bury it deep in its waters bright,—
I have plucked it out of my heart to-night.

Frost.

THERE is something wonderfully exhilarating in a sharp frost. An old-fashioned winter's morning is very enjoyable. Lately the seasons seem to have got a hitch. Our springs are apt to be winters, our summers springs, and our autumns summers, etc., etc. I do enjoy a good fall of snow at the old-fashioned time of the year. I should like to walk to church on Christmas Day in snow boots, and to break the ice in the ruts as I went along. I could no more resist breaking that ice than I can withstand the temptation of plucking the first snowdrop,—both are so tempting. How beautifully the sun lights up the holly berries that decorate the Christmas tree! the 'out-door' Christmas tree—not the dwarf fir-tree, my little darlings, that you are so busy ornamenting with gilded walnuts and dolls:—I mean the holly tree, which I am persuaded is the genuine Christmas tree; for not only is

it full of gifts for the little birds, who come, half-starved, for a meal on its brilliant berries, but, as the old legend tells us, its very prickles were made to remind us of the crown of thorns, in our Christmas mirth; so that even in the midst of our most innocent and seasonable enjoyments we should never wholly ignore all serious thought.

Christmas.

BRING me ivy, bring me holly,
Let the mistletoe entwine,
Let the scarlet berries sparkle
In this Christmas wreath of mine;
Ring on, merry bells, in gladness,
Ring on gaily as ye may,
Ring away all thoughts of sadness,
Tell the world 'tis Christmas Day.

Let us love the joyful season,
Let us hail the blessed morn,
Let each fireside, howe'er lowly,
Love the day when Christ was born;
Happy Christmas, joyful Christmas,
Blessed season, once divine,
Let the scarlet berries sparkle
In this Christmas wreath of mine.

The Ideal.

ALEXANDER SMITH, in his Essay on Men of Letters, remarks that literary compositions tend to destroy simple living and all hearty enjoyment in life. I wonder whether this be so, and whether a disproportionate love of the ideal must necessarily make the real seem tame and commonplace. No doubt it exposes us to that danger; still, to many imaginative and earnest thinkers, the giving expression to their thoughts in writing is a useful safety-valve. In the same essay we are told that if we are happy, every effort to express our happiness only mars its completeness. 'When the tide is full, there is silence in channel and creek.' This is a beautiful and possibly a true idea; at all events, the great bard of nature has put the same sentiment into the mouth of an accepted lover: 'Silence is the perfectest herald of joy. I were but little happy if I could say how much.' In both

these passages, however, the happiness alluded to is not a permanent state of enjoyment, but an exceptional and temporary bliss. They furnish, therefore, no authority on the general question whether the habit of word painting is prejudicial or otherwise to our mental powers; and if it be urged, on the one hand, that such a habit is indicative of a restless and self-tormenting spirit, it must be admitted, on the other, that a limited indulgence in it is often productive of exquisite enjoyment.

Dreamland.

I SEE my home in the twilight dim,
In the shadowy evening light,
And many a thought of bygone years
Comes over my mind to-night;
I hear the voices of other days,
And the tears fall one by one,
While thoughts come and go, as they will to-night,
As I dream by my fire alone.

I hear the linnet from out the elm,
And the bees from the mignonette,
And the sights and sounds of the old spring-time
Seem to hover and haunt me yet;
Dear voices that I never hear,
To all but memory gone,
In thought come and go, as they will to-night,
As I dream by my fire alone.

I dream of the spring-time long ago,
Its birds and its flowers I see,
And fairy showers of rose and white
Come down from the apple tree;
I hear the sound of the distant bells
Ringing in silver tone,
And thoughts come and go, as they will to-night,
As I dream by my fire alone.

Wild Gardens.

I DO not agree with Ruskin in his assertion that few people care about flowers, though I am quite ready to admit that *wild* flowers are not loved or cultivated as they deserve to be. Ruskin says, 'I have never heard of parks kept for wild hyacinths, though often of their being kept for wild beasts.' I have thought, sometimes, if I had a park I would make it a home for all our English wild-flowers. I would have a dingle for primroses and violets, a copse for bluebells and foxgloves, a glade for cowslips and orchisses and daffodils, and a chosen spot for lilies of the valley. I would have every shade of thorn,—scarlet, pink, and white, and double pink, which of all thorns is the loveliest. Then I would have flowering bushes, such as gorse and broom, rhododendrons; and flowering trees, such as laburnums, acacias, tulip trees, crabs, and wild cherries; nor would I forget

a knoll of purple heather and ferns, while the blue forget-me-not should fringe the banks of the stream. It does not occur to the happy proprietors of parks that a very few pounds a year, judiciously laid out in sowing seeds of well-selected wild-flowers, and in planting flowering shrubs and trees, would in an incredibly short space of time do wonders, and give intense pleasure to lovers of nature and of beauty.

The Celandine.

WHEN February snows are past,
And warmer sunshine comes at last,
Half hidden 'neath the ivy-twine,
You find the little celandine;
A star of hope it seems to be,
And doubly dear it is to me,
Because it has a charm, above
All other weeds, to one I love.

Spring Time.

I THINK of them in spring-time,
When the early violets bloom,
When first the wood-birds warble,
And the apple is in bloom;
When gentle April showers
Leave the roses full of tears,
Oh, I think of those who left us
In the spring of other years!

When primroses are peeping,
And when first the cuckoo calls,
When budding cluster roses
Creep along the terrace walls;
When the vine about the lattice
In its freshest tint appears,
Oh, I think of those who left us
In the spring of other years!

We number soon the seasons
  Since those dear ones passed away,
Their memory is cherished
  Fondly in our hearts for aye.
Who can tell how few the spring-times
  Ere that messenger shall come,
Who shall bid us go and join them
  In our everlasting home!

Huffiness.

I DO not know what would become of me if I had to live with a huffy person; for where is the friendship that could long withstand the miserable little annoyances that arise from huffiness? The most genial nature must succumb to it in time. Resistance is of no use; you become thoroughly disheartened at last, and of necessity give in. The causes of huffiness are various. Sometimes it originates in peevishness and irritability; sometimes it arises from vanity. In these cases it only deserves to be utterly despised. Occasionally, however, it may be traced to an over-sensitive temperament, ever on the watch for slights. In this form the complaint deserves our pity. But then comes the question, How is it to be dealt with? I venture to suggest that the most effective mode of treatment is to ignore it altogether.

I have known that plan succeed when every other has signally failed. Once attempt consolation, or explanation, or apology, and you will inevitably find yourself in a false position; so there is nothing for it but time and patience.

The Robin.

When all the band of birds is still,
One little voice is heard,
Amid the winter snow there pipes
One grateful little bird;
He sits upon the rustic stile,
The crimson hips among,
And o'er the dreary moorland rolls
The echo of his song.

And when the crimson hips are done,
And all the berries dead,
He perches on the window-sill,
And waits for crumbs of bread.
We greet the little household bird,
And bid him feast at will,
Because he sings in winter-time,
When other birds are still.

Reticence.

In early life, how many of us 'wear our hearts in our sleeves for daws to peck at'! This is an inconvenient arrangement, which too often leads to sad humiliation. It is the effect of mistrust in self. Every child should be brought up to hold its own opinions, and to have a certain degree of self-reliance. Without these qualities its whole life will be a failure.

Nothing is more certain than that those whose plastic natures can be moulded into any form, and who, ever seeking the guidance and sympathy of others, allow themselves to be controlled by every changing influence, will only realize a succession of disappointments, where they have hoped to meet with varieties of happiness. Then comes reticence to their aid; and at last they wake up, to wonder how they could have trusted others so much, and themselves so little. This is the time when their characters will either shut

themselves up and harden for life, or, by God's mercy, they will recognise Him as their Guide and Friend for all future trials; and they will no longer crave for human support and sympathy, which is denied them on earth.

Passing.

HAST ever had a cage of callow birds to pet and rear,
And nourished them and cherished them and held them strangely dear;
And, after all thy love and care for many a summer's day,
They've spread their wings in ecstasy and flitted far away?

Hast ever found a woodland flower uprooted by the storm,
And in thy garden planted it, and kept it safe and warm;
And just when leaves and flowers were bursting freshly after rain,
A child at play has trampled it and laid it low again?

'Tis ever so: we must not crave for happiness below,
For if we love on earth too much, our Idolized must go;
Not here the sympathy we crave, its depths no tongue
can tell,
But, were we with the angels, we should know the
secret well.

Under the Yew Trees.

UNDERNEATH the spreading yew trees,
Where I have not stood for years,
I am thinking of my boyhood
With a heart too full for tears;
And my memory sadly wanders
To the happy days of yore,
And I see her in the sunshine,
Spinning by her cottage door,
As of yore.

But the seas have rolled between us,
And long years have passed away,
And I stand beneath the yew trees
With a heavy heart to-day.
Daisies on her grave are growing,
I shall never see her more,
As I saw her in the sunshine,
Spinning by her cottage door;
Never more!

Do you Remember?

THE heather still is purpling all the moorland,
The path still winds through fern and underwood,
The waves still break upon the hardy foreland,
Where once we two in dreamy silence stood;
That day the sea was sleeping in the sunbeams,
And fairy wavelets whispered to the sand,
And rocks and cliffs were reddened by the sun-gleams,
And purple shades swept o'er the level land.
Do you remember? do you remember?
Ah, no! you too, you too forget!

And later still, when on that friendly foreland
We built bright castles by the silver foam,
Why did no warning voice sweep o'er the moorland,
To whisper, 'Those bright days will never come'?
But Hope's own colour steeped the things around us,—
The sea, the sky, the very flowers were blue;

What wonder, then, that fairy vision bound us,
And that our hearts wore Hope's own colour too!
Do you remember? do you remember?
Ah, no! you too, you too forget!

And now I stand alone, the night is coming,
I hear the murmur of the lonely sea,
And, looking down, I see the blue flower blooming,—
Forget-me-nots are pleading still for thee.
The years have softened all that weary sorrow,
A brighter hope is dawning o'er my soul;
Though yesterday be dark, a fair to-morrow
Shines through the clouds that o'er my spirit roll.
But I remember—as you remember—
Those golden days will haunt us yet!

Detraction.

In the social intercourse of domestic life, the habit of detraction is the very worst of all damping elements. It is a thorough wet blanket. You start a subject cheerfully, with a view to conversation, but in a moment it is wrested from you and torn into shreds by the detractor, who of course disagrees with you, and ascribes to some bad motive the innocent acts you are discussing. Quiet conversation is very difficult under such circumstances; for the knowledge that their thoughts will be misinterpreted, their sentiments turned inside out, and their idols thrown down from their pedestals, and broken into fragments, make sensitive persons shrink from the encounter. They prefer giving in, sooner than having to struggle against that bar to all chit-chat and sociable enjoyment—detraction.

The Opal.

'Choose not the opal, it will tease thee.'—ANON.

SHE sat there in the sunlight, and she twirled her opal ring,
And flashed the ruby radiance from out the fairy thing.
Oh, well my love he loves me, and proud am I to see
The sparkling, lovely colours that my opal shows to me!

But all at once the colour fadeth suddenly away,
As the sun his glory hideth on a changing April day:
The lady's cheek is paler, and fair hope hath taken wing,
With all the fleeting colours that have left the opal ring.

In vain the gem reflushes, for, that one dark hour of
fear
Has saddened all her smiling, and has left a truant
tear ;
She cannot help the fancy, for she knows the poets
sing
If love dies, light dies instantly from out the opal
ring.'

Susan's Story.

Oh, mother, take the wheel away, and put it out of sight,
For I am heavy-hearted, and I cannot spin to-night;
Come nearer, nearer yet, I have a story for your ear,
So come and sit beside me, come and listen, mother dear.

You heard the village bells to-day, his wedding bells they were,
And Mabel is his happy wife, and I am lonely here.
A year ago to-night, I mind, he woo'd me for his bride,
And who so glad at heart as I that happy Easter-tide!

But Mabel came among us, and her face was fair to see,
What wonder was it, mother, that he thought no more of me!
When first he said fair words to her, I know she would not hear,
But in the end she listened,—could she help it, mother dear?

And afterwards we met, and we were friendly all the same,
For ne'er a word I said to them of anger or of blame;
Till both believed I did not care, and may be they were right,
But, mother, put the wheel away, I cannot spin to-night.

Flowers.

THERE are very few of us who do not love flowers, though I have met one or two unobservant beings who scarcely know the difference between a rose and a peony. Flowers produce an effect on me which can only be produced in an equal degree by music. The associations are so vivid with certain scents as well as sounds, that I scarcely know which to class first in my ideal world. The scent of a honeysuckle will take me back years and years, just as the melody of an old air will recall the play-time of my childhood. Nay, in this particular case, there is almost more reality in the flower than in the strain. Why is this? Is it that the former appeals to two senses, while the latter appeals to only one? or is it because the flower is so fresh, and so exactly what it used to be, while the music has lost its youth, and has become the old song?

April Days.

THE air is soft and warm to-night,
The birds are warbling late,
A fragrant odour steals from out
The woodbine at the gate;
A thousand mem'ries come to me,
With all the sounds of spring:
Then ask me not for songs to-night,
I have no heart to sing.

The wind is whispering low to-night,
The jessamine is stirred,
The cedar and the ivy seem
To woo the weary bird;
The clouds of evening o'er my heart
Their silent shadow fling:
Then ask me not for songs to-night,
I have no heart to sing.

The sun is setting red to-night,
The fields are bathed in gold,
The linnet sings from out the thorn,
As in the days of old;
But oh! I miss the voices that
Were once so glad in spring:
Then ask me not for songs to-night,
I have no heart to sing.

Blue.

THIS, to my taste, is one of the prettiest words, and one of the prettiest colours. There is a softness in the sound as well as in the sight. As scarlet has been said to bear a fantastic resemblance to the blast of a trumpet, so I have heard blue recalls to mind the dulcet tones of a flute. I have a great love for the colour in nature, and a liking for it in art, though there it is much abused. It has undergone more changes of shade than perhaps any other hue; and of all our novel tinctures, the 'new blues' are the most varied. But none of the last constitute my idea of blue. The 'true blue' I mean, is the sweet, clear colour of a cloudless sky on a lustrous morning in June. Yet, lovely as this cerulean tint unquestionably is, it is curiously rare in nature. You will seek for it in vain in the iris. It will not flash forth from the prism. In our flora it is almost

unknown. The peacock cannot boast of it, nor the pheasant, whether British or Himalayan or golden. Mr. Gould cannot point to it on the plumage of his humming-birds. Mr. Spence never admired it on the wing of a butterfly. In our choicest conservatories it will not be found. The large forget-me-not which grows on the margin of the brook has it; so has the small dragon-fly which flutters over the stream. On the jay's wing you may see it; and I am told it is visible on the scales of one or two beetles. The turquoise has it, but no other gem. I have often thought how exquisite a *blue* diamond would be,—not such a stone as now passes by that name, but a real transparent, flashing turquoise—an azure diamond. Well has blue been called the colour of hope; for, being the colour of the sky in its serenest aspect, it affords to mortals the only earthly glimpse of an ideal heaven.

Forget-me-nots.[1]

BLUE as the sky were the simple flowers
We gathered together that day;
Though dead and dry, they recall the hours
Of a happiness passed away.

They grew 'mid the rushes so tall and green,
Low down in the sedges cool;
We drew them out of their home unseen
In a fortunate fairy pool.

And you gave me some, and I took them home,
And treasured those blossoms blue,
Though never a flower was needed less
To be given to me by you.

[1] With music.

Nests.

AMONGST the beautiful objects in nature, birds' nests hold a very prominent place. I have always delighted in them, and wondered at their marvellous construction. Some birds don't seem to care much about neatness. I rather sympathize with these; and I would any day sooner attempt to draw a wood-pigeon's nest than a chaffinch's,—one is so charmingly untidy, the other so curiously neat. I often wonder how the wood-pigeon's eggs keep in their places at all, for the nest contains so many large holes that they can scarcely avoid falling through, and it always seems as if a gust of wind would blow the whole fabric away. I do not care for a marten's nest, it is so hard and brick-like outside; but a linnet's is almost as exquisite as the chaffinch's. Perhaps, however, the most charming of all nests is the little soft bottle which contains th of

the golden-crested wren. On the other hand, the rook's is a clumsy collection of sticks, which displays neither taste nor science. The cuckoo, as we all know, makes no nest at all; and the magpie's nest is a comfortless curiosity; while blackbirds and thrushes are very different artificers; the thrush being the neatest builder, the blackbird the boldest.

Nests.

[illegible] objects in nature, birds' nest [illegible] very prominent place. I have always d[illegible] interest in them, and wondered at their marvell[illegible] construction. Some birds don't seem to care m[illegible] about neatness. I rather sympathize with these I would any day sooner attempt to draw a [illegible] pigeon's nest than a chaffinch's,—one is s[illegible] [illegible]ly, the other so curiously neat. [illegible] how the wood-pigeon's eggs kee[illegible] [illegible], for the nest contains so [illegible] [illegible] can scarcely avoid fal[illegible] [illegible] seems as if a gust of wi[illegible] [illegible]. I do not care [illegible] [illegible] brick-like [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

gh;

Morning.

BURIED in the apple blossom
Hangs a lovely little nest,
For the unwary bird betrayed it,
Darting through the boughs to rest;
And her eyes peer through the blossoms,
Though so still for hours she sits,
Till the gard'ner leaves the garden;
Then from out the tree she flits;
While her mate from yonder elm tree
Watches o'er the little nest,
In and out the branches hopping,
Warbling all the while his best.

Afternoon.

LATER, through the fragrant meadow
By the apple tree we pass,
Broken egg-shells, rosy-tinted,
Lie about the summer grass;
And the little nest is hanging,
Torn in shreds from out the bough;
Still the bird is in the elm tree,
But his song is silent now.

Hope.

How provoking it is to meet with people who will look at everything on the dark side! This, to a great extent, is a constitutional failing, and cannot be helped. If any unfortunate and unforeseen event happens, such persons are at home at once, and 'were quite sure it would occur.' They are ever on the look-out for trouble,—standing, as it were, on tiptoe to catch at a disaster,—and they can only half enjoy the present pleasures of life because of certain dark anticipations which will cloud their horizon for the future.

How grateful, then, should those persons be who are gifted with 'hope'! Like charity, it is 'thrice blessed;' for when it takes up its abode with us, it becomes a blessing to all around us as well as to ourselves.

Towards influencing others for their good, a hopeful person will often do more in five minutes than the most earnest—but desponding—nature could accomplish after months of remonstrance.

A Fable.

REIGNED a stillness in the woodland one sunny summer's day,
I marked the flowers withering beneath the sun's bright ray,
They seemed so sad and sorrowful, I fancied as I stood
That I heard their plaintive voices ringing through the little wood;
'Twas a strange and simple fancy, but it pleased me, as I dreamed
Among the ferns and flowers as the noonday sunlight gleamed.
I listened and I listened, till methought upon mine ear
Came the voices of the flow'rets, like sweet music soft and clear.
The purple foxglove first I heard in dreamy tones bewail
The scorching beams of sunshine, to the lily of the vale;

I heard the snow-white lily softly murmur back again,
Oh, wait with patience, sister, for the gentle summer rain!

I heard the sundew sighing, Ah, sad it is to die
Beneath the golden sunlight and the broad unclouded sky!
I saw the fair wood-sorrel fold her triple leaflets frail,
As she breathed a sad farewell to all her sisters in the vale;
And yet the silver lily whispered softly, Never fear!
Be patient, fairest sister, for the rain will soon be here!

The lady-fern uncurled her fronds to catch the passing breeze,
The bindweed drooped, too weak to clasp her tendrils o'er the trees,
Her bells were closing softly, and her leaves were stiff with pain,
But still the lily whispered, Wait in patience for the rain!

The happy blue forget-me-not could hear the flowers sigh;
The brooklet bore the echo as it babbled freely by;
It bathed the fair forget-me-not, and told the mournful tale
Of all her woodland sisters dying in the distant vale;
And yet the bending lily, though with faltering voice, again
Implores, Have faith, sweet sisters, in the gentle summer rain!

But the lily's voice grew weaker, and her bells were stiff and dry,
Although she tried to raise them to the blue unclouded sky;
She tried to cheer the others with her hopeful words of love,
And bade them wait and hope for help from out the clouds above.

. . . . . .

There was silence in the woodland, and a lull among
the trees,
And then there came a murmuring as of a waking
breeze;
The sky was changed and cloudy, and the breeze was
still again,
And down upon the flowers came the gentle summer
rain.
The lily thrilled and trembled, and the sundew raised
her head,
The bindweed clasped her tendrils round an arching
bough o'erhead;
The lady-fern stood upright, and the sorrel smiled
again;
And methought I heard a chorus, Welcome, welcome,
summer rain!

And the rain fell softly, softly, and caressed each
drooping flower;
Oh, welcome to the woodland was the long-expected
shower!

And the happy lily whispered, See, my faith was not
in vain,
When I bade you hope, my sisters, in the gentle
summer rain!

My fairy dream was over, but I half believed it true,
As I saw the happy flowers raise their heads and
bloom anew.
But the lily looked most radiant, her fragrance filled
the air:
Of all the woodland flowers, none to me seemed half
so fair.
And I learned a wholesome lesson,—yes, I learned no
little good,—
By my fairy dream of faith amidst the flow'rets of the
wood.

Hope to the End.

HOPE, when in thy youth's glad morning
All thy heart is filled with praise,
Every flower thy path adorning,—
Hope ye for the golden days.

Hope ye when the heart's best roses
Wither for the lack of rain,
And thy thirsty soul is empty,—
Hope ye for the shower again.

And when, on thy mid-day journey,
White-winged Peace has flown afar,
Still, though all the night be cloudy,
Hope ye for the morning star.

Hope, when all thy days be numbered,
And thy weary journey past;
By the world's hopes unencumbered,
Hope ye, hope for heaven at last.

Sympathy.

WHAT a precious gift is the power of expressing sympathy! Precious, because utterly apart from all other gifts. Though actuated by the kindest intentions, many persons are lamentably deficient in this power of expression. They may wish to be all, to say all, to do all for others; but their nature rebels, their tongues are tied, and timidity checks their actions.

Some few people, however, find their principal pleasure in showing sympathy towards the afflicted. They know that in this lies their work, and that this is the one thing in which they can be of use. Powerless to command, or to lead, or to stand alone as an example, they can yet mourn with those who mourn, they can alleviate suffering, they can cheer the bed of sickness, they can comfort the sad in heart,—in one word, they can sympathize. They can share in sorrow, and by sharing halve it.

'Impératrice.'

WHEN first we met, long years ago,
I deemed thee kind and calm,
But soon that sympathy of thine
Fell o'er my life like balm.
I guarded well this heart of mine,
Thou wert so high above me;
With all those winning ways of thine,
I did not, dared not love thee.

And yet each day without thy smile
Was blank to me and drear;
I counted but the hours, and said,
'To-morrow brings her here.'
Yet, when thou cam'st, no word of thine
Was ever meant to move me;
Thou wert above this dream of mine,
I did not dare to love thee.

I did not know the subtle charm
That held me like a spell,
But yet I knew I only loved
Thy presence much too well.
The happy hours slid swiftly by,
Bright as the skies above me,
And yet so safe and sure was I,
I did not dare to love thee!

Through the Jessamine.

RIGHT earnestly I sued my love
For one kind look or smile,
She turned her face away from me,
And answered not the while;
Yet as I crossed the little porch,
Perplexed by many a doubt,
I saw her through the jessamine:
Why was she looking out?

I pleaded for a ruby rose
That nestled in her hair,
She turned away in seeming scorn,
And left me lonely there;
Yet as beneath her window-sill
I passed in dull despair,
I saw the rosebud in the grass:
How had it fallen there?

'Tis years ago; her sunny hair
Is still as brown and bright,
And on her hand two little rings
Are flashing in the light;
She is my own for evermore,
And I was wrong to doubt,
Since first behind the jessamine
I saw her looking out.

'Gêne.'

THIS is an indescribable feeling. I do not think it could be dissected. Many never experience it at all. I know of some persons who could not even tell what the word means. Outward things do not seem to affect them. They remain the same always, and do not feel the secret antagonism and constraint with which alien natures afflict others who are differently constituted. I think it is one of life's hardest tasks trying to ignore *gêne*, endeavouring to believe you are 'getting on better' with so and so. The very next half-hour, subjects are broached that swamp you. You do not wish to contradict; you cannot agree; and a mental torpor sets in, and you begin to wonder if you are growing idiotic. It is simply *gêne*. You will rise again when alone. Never fear; your own nature will assert itself, and you will be bright and happy once more, when free from that *gêne*, which you must bear sometimes in your journey through a world where no two natures are constituted alike.

A Home.

WHERE the lime trees throw their shadow
On the daisy-loving grass,
Where the cowslips in the meadow
Scent the footpath as you pass;
Where the hyacinths are blooming
In a cloud of brilliant blue,
Where the nightingales are warbling
All the balmy evening through:
There to-night my thoughts are roaming,
And I let them go and come,
In the purple twilight dreaming,
Of that quiet, happy home.

THERE are some places and some people that one likes to think about in the calm of a summer twilight. They have some influence, some association that harmonizes best with the 'still hours.'

Lucille.

WAKEFUL and thoughtful, she knew not why,
From the lattice she leaned alone,
Resting her cheek on her fair white hand,
While the moonlit sea made moan.
Wide and bright it lay in the light
Of a tender violet sky,
And softly pale was each fairy sail
That glided silently by.

A child in years, with a guileless heart,
She gazed long over the sea,
And vaguely dreamed of a coming dream
That might or might not be.
She leaned out under the clematis flowers,
So fair, so calm and still,
'Neath the violet skies, with a prayer in her eyes
For a strong and stedfast will.

Contentment.

I WISH I was always contented; but I am not, nor, I fear, are any of us. We have all seasons of discontent; and the more blessings we enjoy, the more we want to have. However, in these moods, if we will only look them boldly in the face, we shall be ashamed of ourselves, and come to our senses far sooner than if we hypocritically make either ourselves or others believe that we are the most contented beings in the world. There are times when a tiresome spirit of antagonism seems to possess us. We become fishes out of water,—birds in a net. We may be thrown amongst uncongenial natures, which depress us. This is doubtless a very trying position; but still, if we determine to see it in its true light, it will rather amuse us than otherwise, and we shall be comforted by the reflection that we were born to

be mortified. The shutting of our eyes to the crosses in our lot will never make us contented; but if we meet them honestly, boldly, and in a Christian spirit, I believe we shall end by bearing them with cheerful resignation.

My Star.

TRANSLATION FROM THE SWEDISH.

LONELY I go on my desolate way,
Night shadows hasten the death of the day,
Ah, how the twilight is fading away!

Every wood-bird is safe in its nest,
Every lily is folded to rest,
Every sun-ray has died in the west.

But I have a star in this heart of mine,
All through the darkness its light doth shine:
Love is the name of this star of mine.

Trouble may come and be hard to bear,
Life may be burdened with many a care,
Yet in my heart will the light be there.

All through the gloom of the winter night,
While the snow falleth so pure and white,
Yet will I cherish my lovely light.

For I have a star in this heart of mine,
All through the darkness its light will shine:
Love is the name of this star of mine.

The May Rose.

'Tis spring, and many a brilliant rose is blooming on the wall,
But there's a rose, a little rose, I love above them all;
I know not what its colour is,—a faint, pale shade of gold,
It borrows from the noonday sun ere many hours old.
No brilliant beauty is my flower, but delicately fair;
'Tis like the last late lingering star seen through the morning air.
Ah, little rose, each spring a thousand thoughts come back with thee!
When I was but a little child, thou wast a little tree;
And every year I've seen thee bloom, and loved thee more and more,
Because thou seem'st a part of those 'not lost but gone before.'

A Chat.

How delightful is a good chat, when you can exchange ideas freely and without constraint! Some matter-of-fact people may wonder what you can have to say, if no particular event has happened which requires to be discussed.

My idea of chat, however, has no dependence on time, place, or incident; for, bereft of all outward materials, the pleasure of interchanging thought is in itself a great delight. When in a chatty frame of mind, you and your friend may talk together for an hour, and yet, if a practical person were to ask you what you had been talking about, you might find it difficult to answer in an intelligible manner. You have had no news to pass on, but you have simply been enjoying an extremely pleasant hour in a sociable, easy chit-chat, fluttering playfully from one topic to another, as a butterfly floats from flower to flower.

Fun.

WHAT different kinds of fun exist! I do not imagine that many of us enjoy the same sort.

Amid many varieties of merriment, it is no easy matter to discover three or four friends who thoroughly understand your style of fun; but when you are fortunate enough to meet with them, the effect is highly exhilarating. What good it does one to have a hearty, uncontrollable fit of laughter! It does not happen often. I am afraid I could soon count up the real laughs I have enjoyed during the last twelve months. And even on those occasions nine people out of ten would possibly not have found much to laugh at; for my fun to them would not have been funny. How I pity from my heart the person who never enjoys a hearty laugh! being persuaded, with Laurence Sterne, 'that every time a person smiles — but much more when he laughs — it adds something to this fragment of life.'

There is one style of fun in which I have no sympathy, that which is displayed in practical jokes, —a taste shared, I think, by man in common with the monkey.

Under the Willows.

UNDER the willows, adown the brook,
How often I love to dream,
And watch the birds in their airy flight,
And the leaping fish in the stream!
While children are gathering ladysmocks,
And cropping the cowslips near,
I watch the tiny waves as they fall
In water-breaks crystal clear.

The stream runs on through the meadow land,
Leaving the trout behind;
The chieftain bulrush stately stands,
And waterflags wave in the wind.
Oh, merry the children's voices ring!
And all things seem to say
That life is a glad and glorious thing
Under the willows to-day.

The bird sings loud on the alder bough,
Perched on a leafy spray;
The sound of his music lingers long,
Re-echoes, and dies away.
What does he sing to the ripples to-day?
Is he glad as he flies away?—
He has taught my heart to rejoice and sing,
Under the willows to-day.

Colours.

How wonderfully some few people enjoy colours! while many simply admire them; and others, who apparently have no defective vision, are quite incapable of discriminating between their hues. But the enjoyment I speak of is a peculiar love and appreciation of the beauty of bright tints in nature and in art, and the actually feeling them. It is impossible to describe the sensation. I have often amused myself by looking at a field of wheat, and wondering which combination of colour was the most lovely,—whether the ripe grain blended best with the dark blue corn-flower or the scarlet poppy or the purple corn-cockle. The wheat assumes a more delicate tint when compared with the lilac, and is yellower again when contrasted with the red. Of all lovely combinations of colour in nature, I am inclined to give

the preference to green and violet. Look at the next cluster of purple violets you see nestling amongst the freshest of green leaves, and confess that no harmony of tints can be more charming to the eye.

The Last Flower.

THE autumn days were on the wane,
And winter waited nigh,
The last leaves dropped from off the trees,
And fluttered down to die;
No more the little wood-birds sing,
No more the streamlets play,
And in the fierceness of the frost
The last flower died away.

All day the sunbeams lingered nigh,
That floweret frail to cheer;
The robins sang, 'Ah, leave us not,
Last blossom of the year!'
And all night long the friendly stars
Were watching from the sky,
And glimmered on those petals wan,—
They knew the flower must die.

And, drooping low its weary head,
It heard a spirit sing,
'Fear not to die, sweet sister mine,
Thou'lt bloom again in spring.
Kind nature bids a gentle sleep
Beneath the wintry skies;
When April rain comes back again,
All radiant thou wilt rise.'

And lower bent the floweret's bell,
Its petals paler grew,
But peacefully the promise fell,
That it should bloom anew.
And when the robins came again,
Its fragile life was past,
And stars and sunshine mourned the flower,
Because it was the last.

The Post.

WHAT a welcome arrival is the letter-bag! In the country it is the want of the day. What a change it gives to the current of ideas to open the friendly letter, and for a few minutes to be taken completely out of self! What a great pleasure it is in life, and yet how little do we realize it as regards others! We know what it is to ourselves, but how often do we neglect to give others the same enjoyment! A press of more important occupations may occasionally furnish a real justification for our silence; but, too frequently, our indolence is content to rely on the hackneyed excuse of having 'nothing to say.' Surely we are not so utterly bereft of ideas as to make this a sensible excuse! Surely we are doing something, hearing something, seeing something, or, at all events, reading something which deserves mention in a letter, and which is sufficiently interesting to any

one who loves us! What a delight it is to correspond freely and openly! but this, of course, can only be the case in very intimate friendships. Still, the kind letter of a mere acquaintance is always welcome; and I suspect we very much underrate the power we all possess of giving pleasure to others through the medium of the post.

The Blue Ribbons.

I AM looking for the ribbon that I gave you long ago,
You told me you would cherish it wherever you might go;
I have kept the broken sixpence which you gave that day to me,—
That happy day when last we met beneath the linden tree.
It may be you forget it, but it surely cannot be,
While lovingly I've thought of you, you had no thought for me.
The summer has come back again, the roses are in bloom,
The roses that you trained around the window of my room.

I've tended them so carefully and watched them all the year,
And thought when next the roses bloomed, perchance you might be here;

The summer sun is tinting every bud a rosy red,
But winter-time is in my heart, and all its flowers are dead.
You do not like to speak to me, you have no word to say,
And yet you said you loved me so the year you went away.
I give you back your plighted troth; perchance I may forget
All you told me to remember, in the days when first we met.

Drawing-room Plants.

I HAVE tried many flowers in my room, and by experience I give the preference to the pink begonia, as the very best flowerer. I have had one in bloom for nearly four months. I put it into the basket in December, and it was full of blossom till the end of March.

The cyclamen is also a very useful drawing-room plant, and will last in bloom two months. I do not think a prettier group can be made than a circle of white cyclamen, with a pink hyacinth in the centre of a round basket well covered with moss.

'I am content.'

I AM content to be dwelling in shadow,
If only the sunlight may sweep over thee;
I am content though the thorns be around me,
If only the roses be showered on thee.

I am content though the north wind be cruel,
If sweet southern breezes be comforting thee;
I am content with the dark night around me,
If only the stars may be shining for thee.

I am content though the storm break above me,
If rainbows of promise shine brighter for thee;
I am content though the casket be empty,
If only the jewel have fallen to thee.

Exercise.

VERY few worries can stand against the influence of a good long walk. There is nothing so exhilarating to the spirits;—only try it;—and it certainly affords the simplest remedy for all the little grievances of life. Some persons I know have a great dislike to a walk 'without an object.' They prefer pottering about the garden, or dawdling backwards and forwards on a terrace like a quarter-deck. Delightful enough *after* your walk, but without *that* I sometimes think I could scarcely live. How many petty annoyances have I thus walked away! and how often have I come home in a state of joyous exhilaration, wondering that I could have allowed such trifles to affect me for an instant!

Harvest Time.

For the harvest gathered now
Our most heartfelt thanks we owe;
So let all, by praise and prayer,
Thank our Father for His care.

From the moonlight to the morn,
Nought has harmed our standing corn;
So let all, by praise and prayer,
Thank our Father for His care.

Golden sunshine every day
Chased the rainy clouds away;
So let all, by praise and prayer,
Thank our Father for His care.

If our field containeth more,
Let us leave it for the poor;
And let all, by praise and prayer,
Thank our Father for His care.

Plans.

HAVE you a dislike to plans? I cannot endure them, and I will never make any, if I can help it, beyond the week. It is astonishing how some people can look forward with apparent confidence from winter to summer, and from summer to winter, arranging their schemes for months to come, as if they were really free agents, with absolute power to act as they liked. For myself, I always feel so doubtful about any plans coming off in the manner intended; and then, if it be an agreeable plan, half the pleasure is anticipated by long expectation. How I delight in impromptu visits and unexpected enjoyments! their value is doubled by the surprise; and many a simple occurrence, which would be quite tame if methodically arranged beforehand, becomes a positive treat when it 'takes us unawares.'

When the quiet Moon.

When the quiet moon is rising
By the ever-sounding sea,
While the golden stars are shining,
Mary, I will wait for thee.

When the folded flowers are sleeping,
Silent every bird and bee,
While the evening dews are weeping,
Mary, I will wait for thee.

When the light shines from the lattice,
Then I know thou'lt come to me;
And my heart beats high and gladly,
Mary, as I wait for thee.

Wherefore tarry, wherefore linger,
While I sigh so wearily?
Is not this our trysting hour?
Mary, come, I wait for thee!

Silence reigns o'er vale and woodland;
But the murmur of the sea
Breaks upon my ear so calmly,
Mary, as I wait for thee.

Who is this so lightly tripping
O'er the moonlit grassy lea?
'Tis my loved one! 'tis my darling!
Mary, thou art come to me!

Music.

MUSIC affects minds differently, according to character. I must confess that some sort of music gives me very little pleasure, while another kind can afford me most exquisite enjoyment.

The possession of an ear is a great delight; but at the same time I believe it to be rather an enemy than otherwise to music as an art or science. If you have an ear, you prefer amusing yourself with it in your own way. You prefer playing things as *you* please; and how fatal is this to anything like perfection, professionally speaking! Acquiring a certain degree of excellence with facility, you cannot bear making music, *work*. Melody is your great delight: Harmony comes second. This is, I fancy, theoretically speaking, wrong, and you will only become a superficial musician after all. Never mind,

you will be capable of enjoying a great deal; and if you learn to avoid consecutive fifths and octaves, you may write away, and possibly give pleasure to many who are not deeper in the study of music than yourself.

The Maiden and the Bird.

THE stars were all shining, the moon giving light,
A hush o'er the hills and the valleys that night;
The soft wind of summer kissed lily and rose,
Yet the maiden's blue eyes sought nor rest nor repose.
She leaned from her lattice with tear-troubled eyes,
More clouded and sad than those violet skies;
All nature was silent, no lily awake,
That rocked on the silvery breast of the lake.
All still was the star-lighted dingle and dell,
Till the voice of the nightingale banished the spell.

The notes echoed wildly, so sweetly and clear,
The pink and white roses woke gladly to hear,
And down fell their dewdrops like tears in the dell,
At the voice of the singer each loveth so well.
The heart of the maiden was softened at last,
The dark desolation of spirit was past,

The song of thanksgiving the nightingale trilled
Swept back all the shadows that saddened and chilled.
Sweet bird, she gives thanks, and she sheddeth no tear
For the thorn of last May or the rose of last year!

Primroses and Violets.

I TRUST we shall never outlive our love of these essentially English flowers. It is winter-time now, and the snow lies deep upon the ground; but I, in my mind's eye, can realize what I shall see if I live two or three months longer,—banks all yellow with primrose stars, and purple with sweet violets. Surely this is a sight to long for, and to love! Who that has leisure for *idlesse* can resist the happy influence of a warm, sunny April morning? I do not know, at such a season, a greater luxury than to saunter along the woodpaths in a musing mood, hearing rather than listening to the thrushes and the blackbirds, the wood-pigeons and the cuckoo, while the sound of running water affords a soft accompaniment to the varied melodies of the woodland choir. Browning writes, 'Oh, to be in England now that

April's here!' and, depend upon it, he had a mental picture of all the charms I have been attempting to sketch. How grateful these charms make us, and how they lead our hearts to worship and to praise!

The Myosotis.[1]

'Tis the holy midnight hour,
And glow-worms vigil keep,
A crescent moon is faintly shining
O'er the flowers asleep.

Sleeps the sundew, sleeps the orchis,
Sleeps the lily pale;
Nothing waketh save the brooklet,
Rippling down the vale.

Insects folded in the flowers,
Sleeping soundly too;
Others on their leaves are resting,
Almost drowned in dew.

Suddenly the Myosotis,
Waking from a dream,

[1] The first two stanzas are repeated from 'I will Listen, Love, for thee.'

Sees a blossom in the moonlight,
Floating down the stream.

'Tis a snow-white water-lily,
Guided by a Fay,
Spirit of the little streamlet,
Sailing fast away.

And she sees the Myosotis,
Watching from her cot,
Waves her fairy hand, and whispers,
'Flower, forget me not.'

Other blossoms woke and heard her,
Ne'er those words forgot,
Often called their blue-eyed sister,
Fair—Forget-me-not.

Whether true this fairy legend,
Know nor care I not;
But they call the Myosotis
Still Forget-me-not.

'You and I.'

We sat by the river, you and I,
In the sweet summer time long ago,
So smoothly the river glided by,
Making music in its tranquil flow;
We threw two leaflets, you and I,
To the river, as it wandered on,
And one was rent and left to die,
And the other floated onward all alone.
And oh! we were saddened, you and I,
For we felt that our youth's golden dream
Might fade, and our lives be severed soon,
As the two leaves were parted in the stream.
I look on the grass and bending reeds,
And I listen to their soothing song,
And I envy the calm and happy life
Of that river as it sings and flows along;

For oh! how its song brings back to me
The shade of our youth's golden dream,
In the days ere we parted, you and I,
As the two leaves were parted in the stream.

New Year's Eve.

I HAVE always liked the idea of hearing the clock strike twelve on the last night of the old year. Apart from the solemn thoughts which crowd upon the mind at this time,—apart from the earnestness which the fleeting hours of an old year must always give to prayer,—I have a fancy, an idea, which haunts me, of the departure of the old year's angel who has guarded us so faithfully during the many past months, and I cannot bear losing the last hours of his ideal company. The same fancy makes me wakeful to welcome the new year's angel when the old one has winged his flight from us, bearing with him the record of our inner year, its sins and sorrows. It is but a fancy; but as long as I live I shall be wakeful to regret the going, and to welcome the coming, of my imaginary angels of the old and the new year. I met with some lines of Miss Procter's the other

day, which give me courage to bring my fancy to light:

'I am fading from you,
But one draweth near,
Called the angel-guardian
Of the coming year.
If my gifts and graces
Coldly you forget,
Let the new year's angel
Bless and crown them yet.'

Day Dreams.

DEEP down in my heart was a dream long ago,
And it tinted all earth with a rosy glow;
'Twas too happy to last, and too deep to tell,
But the birds and the flowers they knew it well;
And the young heart cried that its life was glad,
And that nought on this glorious earth was sad.
Alas! for the visions that come and go,
And only the birds and the flowers may know!

Deep down in the valley I whispered it all
To the flowers that wept at the even fall,
And wept the longer that dreams so dear,
They knew could never be earnest here.
The brook I told as it passed me by,
And the lark I told as he sung in the sky;
But they faded and left me long ago,
And only the birds and the flowers may know.

But I think some day, if I watch and wait,
I may find them again at the golden gate,
Up higher than ever the skies are blue,
And at last my visions may all be true,—
When life and its shadows have passed away,
And dawning will break into perfect day;
While the earthly hopes that were lost below,
Will be found in a rest that the angels know.

The Wild Bird.

Translation from the Swedish.

A WILD bird sang merrily one fair summer's day,
Rejoice and be grateful! its song seemed to say,
But it left me and flew to the forest away.

Come, sing once again to me! I cried, Come again!
But I watched and I waited for the bird all in vain,
It never returned again, never returned again,
To cheer me.

A wild hope came fluttering one fair summer's day,
Be true and be constant! its voice seemed to say,
But it faded and left me to live as I may.

O hope, come again to me! I cried, Come again!
But I watched and I waited for the voice all in vain,
It never returned again, never returned again,
To cheer me.

A sweet peace came glimmering one fair summer's day,
Be patient and trusting! its voice seemed to say,
And it whispered, I'll bide with thee ever and aye.

Sweet peace, art thou come to me, I cried,—come at last?
Are the days of my misery behind me and past,
Ne'er to return again, ne'er to return again,
To grieve me?

Eventide.

WHEN the rosy clouds of evening
Sail across the summer sky,
When the woods are hushed in slumber
By the west wind's parting sigh;
Ere it leaves the sleeping woodland,
Ere it whispers to the sea,
O'er my heart it seems to linger,
Bringing quiet thoughts to me.

Thoughts of sorrow, thoughts of gladness,
Thoughts of unforgotten years,
Thoughts of mingled joy and sadness,
Strangely blended smiles and tears.
As it lingers o'er the fir trees,
Sounding like a distant sea,
Calmly, calmly comes the memory
Of those other days to me.

Morning breezes blow more freshly,
  Blow more bravely o'er the sea,
But there seems a kindly greeting
  In the evening air, to me;
Telling softly, telling sweetly,
  Of a hope beyond the sea:
Oh, it speaks of love and heaven
  In the eventime to me!

Weighted.

MOST of us are weighted in some particulars. I cannot think there is any one who is free from every oppression. I never dream of saying to a person, 'How happy you ought to be, with all the advantages *you* possess!' for what means have I of knowing how heavily weighted that very person may be? Outward circumstances do not make happiness. Perhaps there is one bitter drop in the cup which poisons the sweetest waters. I have known persons shrink from the thoughtless probing of friends who would tell them they were the most fortunate creatures in the world. Till I knew a person's *inner* life, I should never venture on such an assertion. At the same time, I do not exactly agree with a censorious friend of mine, who declares that 'no woman is happy unless she can make herself out to be a martyr;' I do not imagine there would be any very great charm in assuming that character.

Roses and Thorns.

WHO has not in his life a trouble keen,
A morbid longing for what might have been,
A thankless scorning of the good that is,
A yearning for a fond delusive bliss
Which still eludes us?—In this world of ours
We must content us to find thorns with flowers!
What are we, that we cavil at our cup,
And doubt its sweetness ere we drink it up?
Nay, rather let us stretch a trusting hand,
And drink it bitter at our Lord's command,
Believing that its bitterness may be
A passport to a sweet eternity.
Oh, dreamers, dream no more of what is past!
Accept the thorns upon the flowers at last:
Take ye your Bibles, hush those dreams to rest,
For God has led you, and His ways are best.

The Sea.

ALL persons have their own pet sea-side. I never feel really at the sea but at one desolate spot on the east coast of Lincolnshire. This place I have visited almost every autumn since I was a 'wee' child, and that is the whole secret of my liking it so much. After the manner of a cat, I attach myself almost painfully to old associations; and so long as I live I shall love that 'most miserable apology for a watering-place,' as an unsympathizing friend of mine once had the hardihood to designate the dear old village of Mablethorpe. How vividly does memory recall my earliest visits to this lone hamlet!—The strange awe felt in crossing the plank which led over the rough sandbank to the shore, where the grand lonely sea first burst upon our view! And then the quaint old jetties, with their rich brown seaweeds, and their green, slimy, and worm-eaten timbers, against which the breakers used to dash with

such hearty good-will, drenching our faces with the salt spray! And then, again, the mysterious expeditions after dark to see the 'waves on fire,' and our very uncomfortable sensations when we *did* see them! All these early recollections endear the place to me. I have long since argued myself into the firm belief that it is charming; and I ask now, almost triumphantly, 'What more can any one in reason require than miles of firm untrodden sand, and as fine a sea as ever broke on shore?'

Mablethorpe.

'Tis a fine October morning, by the broad blue German sea,
A strangely lone and dreary place to many this may be;
No promenades, no band to hear, no shops; but what care I,
While lovingly I watch the long sea line against the sky?
For miles and miles the golden sands are stretching far away,
And fainter in the distance grows the silver fringe of spray;
No rocks or headlands, cliffs or downs,—nought but a wavy line
Of ribbon-grass-grown sandbanks mark this favourite place of mine.

A drearier coast, a sadder shore, there may not truly be,
Yet, 'tis full of boundless beauty with its broad exulting sea.
You do not go for gaiety, no fashion takes you there,
You go to revel in the sea, and breathe the fresh, fresh air.
You love the free unbroken waste of sand, and sea, and sky,
You feel it leads your heart to all things good, and pure, and high;
A majesty there seems in all, appealing to the soul
To worship Him who reigns above, who bade those waters roll.

A Nosegay.

PERHAPS I had better have said a bouquet; but there is an old-fashioned English look about the original word which I like. I do not care for a brilliant or artistic nosegay. Those bought for half-a-guinea at Covent Garden are highly unsatisfactory presents; for, first, they have no scent, and a scentless nosegay is a mere contradiction in terms; next, they are seldom fresh; and, lastly, they are always formal: Nature is overlaid with art, and there is an unmistakeable air of insincerity and hollowness about them. Hothouse flowers are lovely enough in their places; but what I mean by a real English nosegay is something quite different. The cottager's garden will furnish nearly all the materials which I deem necessary for one that you will love and enjoy, and keep near you all day. There is a particular honeysuckle, the flexuosa, without which I consider the nosegay imperfect; still,

a judicious combination of heliotrope, mignonette, jessamine, sweetbriar, the oak-leaf geranium, the sweet leaf of the verbena, and two or three roses of different dyes, will be nearly perfect. Sweet-peas and lavender I could also admit, and a scarlet geranium might possibly be added, just for the sake of effect.

The Silver Moon shone brilliantly.

THE silver moon shone brilliantly
In the clear blue winter sky;
The air was cold, the hoar-frost clung
To the aged oak hard by.

The distant bells of the village church
Were musically ringing,
Sweeping across the heathery plain,
Like angels' voices singing.

But all is still and quiet now,
No sound distracts the ear,—
The village bells have ceased to ring
Their farewell to the year.

Yet, hark! again a joyful peal
Comes o'er the dead leaves sear:
A murmuring wind the tidings brings,
And we welcome a glad New Year.

1854.

VERSES AND SONGS,

CHIEFLY UNPUBLISHED DURING THE AUTHOR'S LIFE TIME.

Alma.

BRAVE and noble, brave and noble,
There they lie so strangely still,—
There they lie, in death's deep slumber,
Silently, on Alma's hill.

Those who yesterday were planning
Gallant actions, glorious deeds,—
Those who fought so boldly, bravely,
Charging on their matchless steeds.

Those who feared no foe, no danger,
Those who foremost rode that day,
And whose fearless hearts beat highly
As they dashed into the fray.

Those who, leaving home and kindred,
Severing every holy tie,
Came to fight for England's glory,
Came on Alma's heights to die;

Came to gain a glorious victory,
Came amongst the true and brave,
Came to earn the warrior's laurels,
Came to share the warrior's grave.

Nobly, nobly have they fallen;
Long will live each hero's name;
England's gratitude records them
In the undying scrolls of fame.

. . . . . .

Pity but those poor bereaved ones,
Who in England moaning say,
'He we loved so fondly, dearly,
Sleeps at Alma, far away!'

1854.

Have I not loved Thee?[1]

TELL me not, dearest, that we must part;
Have I not loved thee? ask of thy heart.
And now in anger thou bid'st me depart;
Have I not loved thee? ask of thy heart.

And though no longer that heart be mine,
Bid me not leave thee lonely to pine.
Can I forget thee, so dear as thou art!
Have I not loved thee? ask of thy heart.

1857. [1] With music.

To the Crown Princess of Prussia.

WHEN we lately gazed upon thee
In thy simple bridal dress,
From our hearts we warmly blessed thee
In thy youth and loveliness.
Pure white rose, thy fittest emblem,
Lily pale and jasmine spray,
All the fairest flowers of England,
Graced thee on thy wedding day.
Every heart will long regret thee,
Every heart thy goodness knows;
Farewell, England's eldest daughter,
Fare thee well, our English Rose!
May thy life be glad and happy,
May no shadow cross thy brow,
May thy heart keep all its gladness,
And be free from care, as now!

England's prayers have all gone with thee;
Heaven protect thee from all woes!
May the German hearts be faithful,
May they guard thee from all foes!
Farewell, England's eldest daughter,
Fare thee well, our English Rose!

1858.

'Twas many a Year ago.

'TWAS many a year ago, on a balmy summer's morn,
When the rose and the lily were steeped in dew,
And trembled the bells of harebell blue,
Which burst into bloom at dawn.

A fair young child was there, alone in that little wood,
Making a wreath of the woodbine sweet,
Whose fairy-like blossoms wound over her feet,
Where daintily she stood.

The golden floating curls were kissed by the sunbeam there,
Her blue eyes glanced and gleamed around,
On the gem-like flowers which studded the ground
Around and everywhere.

Till, weary at length with play, on a mossy bank she lay,
Soothed by the scent of the woodbine flowers,
And lulled by the calm of the midday hours,
She slept by those flowerets gay.

And the sprites of the little wood all gathered around the child,
And each of them stole from her sunny hair
A golden thread so dainty and fair,
And chanted a lullaby wild.

The child awoke at eve. The sun was sinking fast,
The shadows were deep and broad and long,
And faint were the birds in their evening song,
For the life of the day was past.

The child was not afraid: she tried to find her way
Through the tangled brake and the curling fern;
But no path or track could her eyes discern,
As farther she strayed away.

Till, tired and weary at last, the little one sat down
Near a bed of wild hyacinths blooming and gay,
While the sunlight faded and fainted away,
Till the last broad beam was gone.

Her eyelids closed again, and long she slumbered on,
Chilled and weary, and all alone,
With feverish limb and aching bone,
Her senses almost gone.

She lay till morning came; and drooped the little head,
And the waxen face was pale and wan,
The colour from lip and cheek was gone;
For the little one was dead.

And the sprites all flocked around, and their tender farewell given,
They plaited the threads of her golden hair,
And watched her there till an angel fair
Came down for the babe from heaven.

Lavender Fields.

NEAR HITCHIN.

A SIGHT most beautiful to view,
Those brilliant fields of waving blue!—
And o'er the flowers I saw arise
A cloud of pure white butterflies.
They hovered in the perfumed air,—
A thousand white wings fluttering fair,—
And danced and waved the flowerets blue,
As if they tried to flutter too.
I could have watched the field for hours,—
That living cloud above the flowers;
'Twas such a pleasant, sweet surprise,
The lavender and butterflies!

August 1858.

The Blackbird.[1]

I HEARD a blackbird gaily singing
One November day,
He warbled as in summer-time,
Upon a leafless spray.
He sat alone—he sang alone—
Upon that dreary tree;
A joyous sound of summer-time
His music seemed to me.
Blithe blackbird, singing thus alone
Upon that dreary day,
Thy carol hath reproved my heart,
And cast my care away;
I think of thee when winter frosts
Seem of my life a part,
And try to keep the summer feeling
Ever in my heart.

1858.

[1] With music.

Spring Time.[1]

Oh, I remember the spring-time,
The spring-time long ago,
The brightest, warmest spring-time
That ever the heart can know!
I remember the ivy arches
In the wood we loved the best,
Where, low down in the larches,
We found the thrush's nest!

You remember, when we were children,
How hand in hand we'd go,
To gather the purple violets
That under the elm tree grow?
I saw them but yesterday morning,—
The very same roots are they;
And back to the days of my childhood,
My fancy roamed away.

Probably 1859. [1] With music.

Serenade.[1]

SLEEP, dearest, sleep—
Thy slumber soft and deep,—
A slumber full of pleasant dreams,
Which shed o'er thee their golden beams!
Sleep, dearest, sleep — Sleep, dearest, sleep — Sleep, dearest, sleep!

Rest, loved one, rest!—
May peace dwell in thy breast,—
Such peace as day can never bring!
Night comes on her silver wing.
Rest, loved one, rest — Rest, loved one, rest — Rest, loved one, rest!

January 16th, 1860.

[1] With music.

The Sea-Bird.

A SEA-BIRD dipped his pinions,
  Skimming swiftly o'er the sea,
Then sailed upon its surface,
  O'er the ripples, silently.
The sunlight glittered on his wings,
  And seemed just then to me
Like a thousand sparkling diamonds, set
  Upon an emerald sea.

1860.

The Sun is Shining.

THE sun is shining bright and cheerily,
Gilding all the bay;
Then rouse thee, rouse thee—ne'er so wearily—
Chase thy gloom away!
Trouble and toil are the lot of all,
While in this world we stay;
List to the voice that bids rejoice,
And hope for a brighter day!

Thou couldst not have thy wish, then never
Believe 'twere good for thee;
Leave all to Him whose ordering ever
The wisest, best must be.
And lest of the mercies left thee,
The vision should pass away,
List to the voice that bids rejoice,
And hope for a brighter day!

The winter snows are deep and wearisome,
Falling cold and chill;
But underneath, the sweet spring blossoms
Are sleeping safe from ill.
Soon will the sun disperse the storm,
And soon will the snowdrops bloom;
And soon will thy grief find sure relief,
And gladness succeed to gloom.

October 1861.

One Evening.

'Tis golden autumn; still the woods are green,
Fresh tipped with dying summer's latest shoots.
No more we listen to the blackbird's notes;
And robins carol where the thrush has been.
How sweet is every hedge with 'traveller's joy'—
The lady clematis, whose moonlight flowers
Will gladden all the lanes these many days!
The woodbine's youth is past,—her face is pale,
Her crimson died away with summer hours.—
How sunny are the fields with yellow maize,
Thrown o'er the landscape like a golden veil!
The merry harvest-time is come again,
And anxiously we watch the passing clouds,
And oft the scarlet pimpernel; whose flowers,
If widely open, scorn the fear of rain.
We'll mount the knoll that overlooks the woods,
And mark the view. Old Windsor's lordly towers

Are on the left, and crown the wooded hill;
We cannot see the river, but 'tis there;
A silver stream, where proud swans sail at will.
The sun has set, and left an amber sky,
With streaks of crimson melting into gold.
How fair it is! let's sit awhile,—'twere best,—
And see the little wild-flowers gone to rest.
The bee is late to-night, he passed us by,
To nestle in the harebells. O'er the hill
The harvest moon is rising, and the stars
Are coming out in thousands, purely bright.
We'll go, and in our inmost hearts thank God
For such a night!

KNOWL HILL, *August* 1861.

The Old Yew Tree.

MANY a year, through storm and sunshine,
Underneath the heaven's own blue,
Spreading wide thy noble branches,—
Hast thou flourished, goodly Yew!

In the early spring I love thee,
Freshened by the April showers,
While the doves are cooing softly
In the silent morning hours.

In the summer time I love thee,
Bathed in sunshine, golden gay;
'Mid thy grateful shade, the roses
Bloom, and bless thee every day.

In the morning, after sunrise,
Webs of gossamer appear,

Spangled o'er with brilliant dewdrops,
In the sunbeam, crystal clear.

In the autumn, well I love thee,
When the green leaves grow more strange;
Then I know thee, firm and stedfast,
Promising thou wilt not change.

When the groves are bare and joyless,
Not a leaflet to be seen,
Then thou art my pride and pleasure,—
All the winter grandly green.

When the wild birds all are silent,
And the woods and dales are sad,
Then the robins in thy branches
Make our little garden glad.

But, for more than this I love thee,
For, thou art an emblem true
Of the inner life, unchanging,—
Of the hope for ever new!

Thanks, old tree, for all thy lessons,—
Thanks for all thou teachest *me*,—
Ever to keep sure and stedfast
In the storms of life, like thee.

What though trouble overwhelm me,
May the one bright hope be such,
That the heaviest outward burden
Shall not crush my spirit much!

Still may I for aye remember,
When the winter storms are o'er,
That the spring must come to cheer me
And refresh my heart once more!

Fare thee well! Long may thy branches,
Spread beneath the heaven's own blue!
Through the storm and through the sunshine,
Proudly flourish, noble Yew!

IRBY RECTORY, *November* 1861.

The Bells and the Waves.

THE music of the ceaseless wave
Falls softly on the breeze;
And whispers low the summer wind
Amid the myrtle trees;
While from the little church I hear
The simple evening chime:—
Listen, listen, listen, listen!—
The bells and the waves keep time!

The wayside roses, one by one,
Fold up their petals bright;
And folds the little celandine,
That loves the sunny light;
As o'er the thymy turf I hear
That simple evening chime:—
Listen, listen, listen, listen!—
The bells and the waves keep time!

The evening air is strangely still,
  The light grass scarcely stirs,
A golden glory from the sky
  Comes streaming through the firs;
As faintly from the downs I hear
  That simple evening chime:
Listen, listen, listen, listen!—
  The bells and the waves keep time!

BRADING, ISLE OF WIGHT, *March* 1862.

On the Death of Prince Albert.

I.

THERE is weeping, there is mourning,
Where so lately mirth has been:—
English hearts are heavy laden;—
We are weeping for our Queen.
But she does not hear our voices,
And she cannot see our tears,—
Oh; there is but One to help her
With the burden that she bears!

II.

We may pray for her in silence,
To our King, upon the Throne,
That another crown may wait her
When she lays aside her own;
We may pray that she may meet him,
Whom she mourns with grief so great,
'Mid the angels sent to greet her
At the radiant Golden Gate.

III.

But, for years may she be spared us,
If it be our Father's will!
For, the voices of her children,
Bid her live to bless them still—
Bid her list, throughout the nation,
To one mighty burst of tears:—
'God comfort thee, Victoria!
God save thee many years!'

December 16, 1861.

Tide Time.

THE western wind is soft and still,
The crimson sun is low;
And from the meadow to the sand
The swallows come and go;
The distant waves break on the shore
In one long line of white;
The fair May tide is coming in,
With majesty, to-night.

Inland the larks are singing still,
Although the day is done;
The yellow-hammers pass me by,
All golden in the sun;
The distant tower stands clearly out
Amidst the orange light;
And comes the tide, with majesty,
Across the sands to-night.

Each moment redder grows the sun,
The silent sea more blue;
And round the headland far away
Comes one white sail in view.
Faint lilac is the line of coast
Far o'er the waters bright;
And sweeps the tide, with majesty,
Across the sands to-night.

SOMERCOTES, *May* 1, 1862.

The Two Nests.

A NEST there was in a bonnie may tree,
In the fairest of fairy bowers;
And methought how happy the bird must be
In her nest with the perfumed flowers:
But the children came, and together they vied
Who should pluck the best bunches of may;
And the bird's little nest very quickly they spied,
And they recklessly bore it away.

A nest there was in a prickly tree,
In a dark and dismal holly;
And methought how weary the bird must be
Of her nest so melancholy:
But the children came, and they hurried by
To rifle a fairer tree;
And the bird in the holly, I then confessed,
The far wiser bird to be.

In the forest of life, two different glades
Are lying before me to tread:
Shall I push my way through the darkest shades,
Or follow the flowers instead?
I will think of the bird and her nestlings' doom,
And keep to the lonelier way,
Lest enemies come where the fair flowers bloom,
And carry my treasures away.

SOMERCOTES, *May* 3, 1862.

The Sea Garden.

THERE'S a corner in the garden, in the garden by the sea,
Gay with sweet and smiling blossoms,—common blossoms though they be,—
And I walk there in the evening, gladdened by the fragrant air,
Thinking, with my little garden not a greenhouse can compare.
First, a row of double daisies, rosy in the setting sun,
And a single stock that scents the air when day is nearly done;
Above me, one white lilac, giving out her faint perfume;
At my feet, a golden group of meadow cowslips all a-bloom.

One blackbird sings unweariedly, the little larks among,
And from the elder wood I hear the cuckoo's evening song;
But the thing of greatest beauty, and which pleased me most of all,
Was that rosy apple blossom trained about the garden wall;—
So delicate, so pink and pearl, its waxen beauty there,
I looked at it from time to time, and thought it very fair.
In after days, how often will the memory come to me
Of those sweet and simple flowers in the garden by the sea!

SOMERCOTES, *May* 6, 1862.

One Afternoon.

We three came in from a walk to the farm,
And none were empty-handed,
For one had a basket swung on her arm
Of cresses freshly landed;
And one had a nest she had found in the hedge,—
A last year's nest we thought it,—
No blue eggs there, no feather of fledge,
Or sure we had not brought it.

No,—birds long flown to the woods away,
To sing their songs of summer,
Long flown to the west,—they left their nest,
To please the earliest comer.
Say what had the third in her hands, I pray,
If none were empty-handed?—
A posy of daisies, all rosy red,
Her fancy had demanded.

The larks they sang in the wildest way,
High in the blue above us,
Our hearts were light, and we felt to-night
That all things seemed to love us;
So fond the song of the blackbird near,
So tame the flying swallow,
So soft the fall of the cuckoo's call
Far over the field and fallow.

SOMERCOTES, *May* 8, 1862.

At a Gate.

WARBLE, little birds, at sunset,
Warble to the glowing west;
With a lullaby the sweetest,
Sing the golden sun to rest.
Sent he not, at early morning,
Brightest beams to greet your nest?
All day long his smiles have cheered you,
Till he crimsoned in the west.
Hush! the clouds of evening gather;
Lull your song and droop the wing;
But again, at happy sunrise,
Grateful birds, awake and sing!

SOMERCOTES, *May* 9, 1862.

The Nest in the Woodbine.

I STOOD beneath the balcony one evening in May,
And watched the sunset colours melt from crimson into grey;
I thought about a thousand things alternate grave and gay;
A bird flew from the woodbine, and it sent my dreams away.

'Ah! little bird, where is thy nest?' I cried, and, looking up,
Half smothered in the woodbine leaves I saw a little cup,
So round, so close, so fairy-like, with moss and grasses green,
And tiny sticks and little straws all woven in between.

Content ye! never fear me, little bird; come back again;
Come back, and sit the closer, for the day is on the wane!
Where the moonlight glistens on thee through the woodbine all the night,
Dost thou dream, above thy nestlings, of to-morrow's eager flight?

When the moon is growing smaller, and the apple-blossoms fall,
Then thy brood will be for flying;—wilt thou grieve to lose them all?
Will no thought of moonlight haunt thee?—will the dream have passed away
Of thy nest amid the woodbine in the pleasant month of May?

SOMERCOTES, *May* 12.

A Walk.

THE wind was high, the air was chill,
And clouds hung overhead,
And, leaving straight the bleak sea bank,
We took the road instead.
We walked along the level road,
Till to the wood we came,—
If fifty lately planted trees
Be worthy of the name;—
Yet in the marsh the singing birds
Do hold it very good;
So, for the sake of courtesy,
We'll say it *was* a wood.

We passed along the second bank,
And through the little gate,
Where rabbits ran by hundreds,
Leaping early, leaping late.

We crossed the tiny streamlet,—
A plank served as a bridge,—
And then we kept the footpath
Along the fresh green hedge.
We peered amid the may-buds,
Though much by thorns oppressed;
We found, along that hedgerow,
Many a linnet's little nest.

The blackbirds sang right merrily, with thrush and finches small;
And all agreed this walk had been the pleasantest of all.

SOMMERCOTES, *May* 14.

Too Late.

LADY ALICE slowly wandered through the flower-scented wood,
And the birds made wildest music high above her as she stood;
Much she marvelled at their singing,—wondrous clear and sweet the strain!
First the thrushes; then the blackbirds gave the cadence back again.
'Ah!' she cried, 'my bird in bower gives me not such songs as these;
Yet perchance he'd sing as sweetly were he free among the trees!

'Oft he sits in sullen silence, though amid the roses hung:
Does he pine for space and freedom—all his feathered mates among?

Ah! but I should miss his calling, by the window of my room,
Where the crimson rose leaves, falling, waft to me their sweet perfume!
I should miss him in the morning, when his singing low and clear
Trembles through the little casement, thrilling all my dreaming ear,
And ere yet my senses waken to the dear familiar note,
Filling all my sleep with sweetness from the music of his throat!
I should miss him most at even, when the sun is sinking low,
And his tones awake from slumber hopes that perished long ago!
And so well he seems to know me, when I deck his cage with green,
And upon the sandy flooring peers the wicker bars between.'
She was silent, and the thrushes carolled loudly from the tree,

And it seemèd to her fancy, all were singing, 'Set him free!'
As she strolled on by the blue bells, bending in the gentle breeze,
Still she thought the birds in chorus sang out 'Freedom!' from the trees.
Hastily she hied her homewards:—'Caged my bird no more shall be!'
And she said, 'He shall be singing soon upon the highest tree.'

. . . . . .

Flushed, and with her speeding breathless, on the balcony she stood;
Still she heard the wood-birds calling, 'Freedom, freedom!' from the wood;
Then, with tearful eyes averted, opened she the prison door:
Could she bear to watch his flitting, whom she ne'er should fondle more?
All was silent, very silent, and, with sudden hopeful glow,

Cried she, 'Sure it was my fancy, and he careth not
to go!'
And she said with merry laughter, 'Wilt thou stay
with me instead?'—
On the sands he lay in silence; and the bird she
loved was dead!

SOMERCOTES, *May* 14.

A Storm.

A STORMY eve in troth it was,
And down the red sun sank,
And Donna Nook stood fair to see,
Red gleaming on the bank.
The roaring waves upon the bink
Were loud and dread to hear,
And dull and darker grew the sky,
As rolled the tempest near.
The housewife stood upon the step:
'Will it be soon?' she said;—
The goodman answered ne'er a word,
But sadly shook his head.
The lightning flashed, the thunder rolled,
And wildly dashed the sea:
'The storm comes on apace,' she said,
And shuddered silently.

The rain fell madly, and the wind
Came driving from the sea:
'God save the souls upon the deep
This awful night!' saith she.

SOMERCOTES, *May* 16.

Marsh Mist.

WELL for me I walked this morning; for a blinding
mist has come,
And we cannot see the farmstead, or the cottage
nearest home.
Driving o'er the level marshes to the blue wolds far
away,
Densely rolling like a phantom, nought its headlong
course can stay.
Hidden all the line of water, hidden Donna Nook at
last,—
Awful in its onward driving,—would this dreadful
mist were past!
Here a swallow craves protection; on the balcony she
sits,
Pluming wing, that it may bear her swiftly, surely,
when she flits;

With a breast of snowy whiteness, and a crest of vivid
blue;—
And a rich brown patch of beauty 'neath her throat
she weareth too.
Pretty swallow! rest thee duly, sitting by my window-
pane:—
Ah! she flies,—the mist is over, and she knows her
way again!

SOMERCOTES, *May* 17.

Contrast.

VERY calm and blue the water,
Like a mirror, where I stand,
Yet the breakers in the distance
Loudly roar against the sand.
Storm and calm together blended,
Lake and ocean here combined;
Silver blue the water near me,
Snowy white the waves behind.
Keep away, ye waves, we pray ye,
Come not raging, foaming here;
Much we like you in the distance,—
Much we should dislike you near!

SOMERCOTES, *May* 17.

The Stray Lamb.

As I wandered along, the trefoil among,
I heard a mournful bleating,
Though young lambs played in the clover field,
And gave me merry greeting.
At length I spied, by the hedgerow side,
One little lambling straying
The grasses among; and it seemed to long
To be with its playmates playing.

It wandered over the pinkest clover,
Nor cared for the fresh green wheat;
Its heart was there where the young lambs were,
And sad was its weary bleat.
And I said to myself, 'Peace, little one, peace!
For the shepherd will surely come,
At the fall of the sun, when the day is done,
And carry thee safely home.'

I turned me back again slowly home,
As the sun sank grandly gold,
And I thought how grateful the lamb would be
To be safely back in the fold.
And, further, I thought how well for me,—
Were I 'mid the anxious few,
In this world so cold,—to be safe in that fold,
Where my Shepherd will lead me too!

SOMERCOTES, *May* 19.

Triple Growth.

THE full May moon in splendour
  Rises o'er the sleeping sea,
Silver tinting every ripple,
  Purely lighting all the lea.
We have watched her patient shadow
  Growing gradually bright;
And her rays upon the apple blooms
  Will rest throughout the night.

When apple blooms were budding,
  Then the moon was very young;
As a little silver crescent
  In the summer blue she hung.
Now the rosy showers are falling
  From the blossoms on the tree;
And the moon is in her glory,
  Very beautiful to see.

Almost hidden by the blossoms,
There a patient bird has been,
Since the little silver crescent
Of the lady moon was seen.
Now in pride, behold her flying
With her nestlings by her side;
With the growth of moon and flowers
Of a surety they have vied.

SOMERCOTES, *May* 19.

To my Dog.

Come, leave the lucerne, Lilly, for the dew is falling fast,
And thy feet of snowy whiteness will be very wet at last.
Come away and walk beside me, chase the little birds no more,
Leave the lucerne till to-morrow,—come upon the sandy shore.
Oh, but this is rare enjoyment! say you,—leaping in the green!
Where have I the like in London?—where is lucerne ever seen?
Let me revel in the dewdrops; for my feet I do not care:
Time enough for trouble, say you, when I'm led about the square!

And I shall be very weary of the fretting of my chain;
I shall languish for the lucerne, and the summer grass again!

Somercotes, *May* 20.

Grief.

THE wind was boisterous, and drove in gusts from out the west,
And down we walked along the road that sheltered us the best;
We lingered by the scented hedge, all beautiful with may,
To see how all the linnets fared on such a windy day.
Two little nests in safety hung,—the startled birds flew out;
The hedge had screened them from the wind, and kept them safe, no doubt.
But as we walked along, we found one little nest o'erthrown,
And on the ground one little egg lay broken and alone;

And now the linnet sitteth mute; most sad and silent
she;
A-mourning for her ruined nest upon the elder
tree.

SOMERCOTES, *May* 22

Sunset.

AN apple-blossom flush, at first,
Upon a pale green ocean nurst;
That, changing to a peaceful blue,
Doth shade into a lilac hue;
Which, quickly flushing into rose,
All blushing into crimson glows.
About the sun, in red array,
All other colours faint away,
As, in a flood of rosy gold,
He sinks behind the purple wold.

SOMERCOTES, *May* 23.

Eventide.

THE western wind is hushed to sleep,
The sea is strangely still,
The ships seem dreaming on the deep,—
No breeze the white sails fill.
The line of sea is richly blue,
And gleam the sands like gold;
The level marsh takes many a hue,
And purple lies the wold.

Not far from us, across the sands,
The fishing town of Clee,
In sunset colours, warmly stands
Above the quiet sea.
The wooded hills, some miles away,
By Pelham's Pillar crowned,
Are faintly lilac,—softly grey
The deepening mists around.

The linnets sweetly sing in-land,
The thrushes carol loud,
The sea-gull calls across the sand,
Larks answer from the cloud.
Not many days we shall be near
This silent fresh sea-side;
Not many nights we have to hear
These sounds at eventide.

SOMERCOTES, *May* 24.

The Iris.

I HAVE sung of many flowers,
In the garden by the sea,
But thou, regal purple iris,
I have ne'er a word for thee,
E'er from blue to violet shading,
In the glory of the sun,
In the western wind of even,
Wave thy blossoms, every one.
Nought can please the eye more fully,
Nought exceed thy purple power,
As thou standest in the beauty
Of thy blooming, royal flower.
Like an army ranged for battle,
All thy blossoms seem to be;
To defend the other flowers
Of the garden by the sea.

Nahant, May 26.

Wedding Song.

MERRILY, this summer morning,
Ring the simple village chime!
Strew the sweetest blossoms freely,—
Roses, lilies, in their prime!
We can hear the bells, in fancy,
Shaping words of joy and pride,
Bearing on the air the message,—
'Blessings, blessings on the bride!'

Little birds about the bushes,
Sing as gaily as ye may;
Cheer the bride with merry music,
Greet her on her marriage day.
Flowers that wait the noontide sunshine,
Burst, we pray you, into bloom,
So that she may smile in passing,
Gladdened by your sweet perfume.

But, far more than these, be near her
And about her path through life;—
May the sunshine of God's favour
Shine upon the happy wife!
What, at best, our feeble blessings?
Rather pray, whate'er betide,
That our Father's love and favour
Rest for ever with the bride!

SOMERCOTES, 1862.

Firelight.[1]

When the fire is sinking low,
How the days of long ago
Come back, with griefs and pleasures that they gave!
Oh! those visions of the past,
We have buried them at last;
But forget-me-nots are growing on their grave.

And Hope can never die,—
She waiteth meekly by;
Her white wings wave between us and the past.
And she biddeth us be still;
Good will triumph over ill,
And angel voices whisper peace at last.

December 1862.

[1] With music.

Alexandra.

With bursts of loyal welcome thou art greeted in our isle;
The best and noblest in our land are waiting for thy smile;
The true heart of our England beats with sympathy and pride,
And mighty is the voice of welcome to the royal bride.

The northern breeze hath wafted us a flower across the sea;
Transplanted to our garden, may it flourish royally!
And if no flower can ever bloom without some little rain,
All transient be the showers, and speed the sunbeams back again!

Right tenderly we'll guard thee, Danish blossom, in
our isle,
And cherish thee beneath the happy sunshine of God's
smile.
May every good and perfect gift for thee be held in
store!
God's blessing rest upon thee, Alexandra, evermore!

March 1863.

The Summer Wind was Sighing.

THE summer wind was sighing, and the apple blooms were dying,
And some were lightly resting on the slender blades of grass;
Some falling down to quiver on the bosom of the river,
And, wooed by parent blossoms, mirrored brightly in its glass.
The willow holt was ringing with a gush of woodland singing,
The cuckoo buds were waving in the tender summer air;
The bees were humming praises to the rosy little daisies,
And butterflies swung lightly on the many blossoms there;
The fishes, silver glancing, through the reeds and rushes dancing,

Entangled 'mid the osiers and the water weeds
around;
The may-buds were awaking, and their first glad
glances taking,
And buttercups and daisies gemmed the all-en-
chanted ground.
Oh, our hearts leaped with enjoyment, and our eyes
had full employment,
Marking all the wealth of beauty, all the glory of
the spring!
And although a tinge of sadness shadowed all our
simple gladness,
Yet the fresh delights of nature made our very
spirits sing;
For to earth such beauty given,—could we doubt it
that, in heaven,
More glorious a thousand times God's works must
surely be?
But the germs of every feature may be given us in
nature,
And a faint fair gleam of promise He permitteth us
to see.

Could the love of beauty bind us to the earth we leave
behind us?
Surely not; for scenes more perfect will our happy
spirits know!
Yet, seen through sinful earth-light, God reminds us
of our birthright,
And leads our hearts to worship through His won-
drous works below.

March 20, 1864.

One Night by the Sea.

Oh, dear the memory is to me
Of that one evening by the sea,
When, lighted by the stars alone,
We heard the weary surges moan!
Those golden stars were silver soon,
When suddenly the lovely moon—
An argent crescent o'er the sea—
Uprose in silent majesty.
The dark ship, with her sails spread wide,
Awaiting there the coming tide,
Lay still, and oft beneath her beams
The bright waves flashed in sudden gleams;
The red star pierced the purple mist,—
A ruby set in amethyst,—
And on the sea its sparkle lay,
Like some bright firefly, out at play.

September 1864.

The River.

Oh, the river! oh, the river!
Flowing peacefully along,
Singing ever, singing ever,
To the reeds a quiet song.
Silver in the midday sunshine,
Amber in the evening glow,
Calmly glides the happy river,
Surrey's wooded heights below.

Oh, the river! oh, the river!
How we loved its rest and peace!
For it seemed a happy spirit,
Singing onward to release.
Never stayed by storm or sunshine,
Ever flowing to the sea,
Mindful of its home and haven,
As a spirit e'er should be.

By the cowslips and the mallows,
  By the waterflags and weeds,
By the swans amid the shallows,
  On their nests among the reeds;
By the clumps of snowy blackthorn,
  By the almond trees in bloom,
Calmly glides the happy river
  To its distant ocean home.

And our thoughts went with the river
  Down this drifting life of ours,
Flowing through a sunny dreamland,
  Studded either side with flowers.
Fain, perchance, a thought would linger,
  By forget-me-nots still fair;—
But the current of life's river
  Hath no need to linger there.

Ever onward, ever onward,
  Like the river we must glide,
Sometimes with a tranquil surface,
  Sometimes with a troubled tide.

I sat by the Window.[1]

THE moonlight shone on the terrace walls,
And silvered the scarlet flowers;
The deep shadows fell on the star-lighted dell,
And darkened the woodbine bowers.
Oh, voice so soothing, for thee I long,—
Thy plaintive echo's thrall!
Oh, methinks still I hear that sad, sweet song,
That I heard at the evenfall!

I sat by the window, sad and still,
One peaceful summer night,
I turned me away from the blithe and gay,
And the glare of the candle-light;
The while sweet music floated along,
And held my heart in thrall!
Oh, methinks still I hear that sad, sweet song
That I heard at the evenfall!

1865. [1] With music.

There is an Hour.[1]

THERE is an hour at eventide,
All other hours above,—
It fills the heart with tenderness,
And sends it dreams of love.
When the evening dews are weeping,
And the birds are gone to rest,
I will think of thee, at sunset,—
'Tis the hour I love the best.

The night-moth on the heliotrope
Will hover softly there,
The silver dew will seek to leave
Upon the rose a tear.
When stillness falls upon the flowers,
A sweet untroubled rest,
I'll think of thee, at sunset,—
'Tis the hour I love the best.

[1] With music.

The crescent moon is shining
In a bed of azure blue,
The golden clouds sail onward
With changing form and hue.
And I think the air-borne voices
Chant, 'This is not your rest;'
So I think of thee at sunset,—
'Tis the hour I love the best.

August 29, 1865.

My Flowers.

My flowers!—They stand so fresh and fair,
Well clothed in greenest moss,
With fern and lilies coyly decked,
With ivy wreathed across.
The early blooms of April gay,
I coaxed to come in March,—
My sweet geraniums' perfume now
Is wafted through the arch.
O flowers, whose gracious presence makes
The glory of my room,
I thank you; and, revere the Hand,
That bade you live and bloom!

Irby Rectory, *March* 21, 1865.

The Midsummer Roses.[1]

TO V. A. Y.

THE midsummer roses are scenting the air;
A fancy comes with them to-day:
There are three sweet flowers, left me to love,
But one has been taken away.

Gathered while yet in the tender bud,
Transplanted, my floweret small,—
To bloom in a garden of light and love,
Where never a rose can fall.

Some day, I hope, I may see my flower;
The journey will soon be past;
And oh, that my wandering feet may find
That garden of light at last!

July 12, 1866.

[1] *Book of Everyday Thoughts*, with music.

In Memory of ——.

ONE more voice to sing in heaven,
One more harp attuned to praise,
One more spirit-freedom given,
In the new year's early days!
She was singing when she left us
But a few short hours ago,
Ere the morning light bereft us
Of her voice—'tis silent now!—
Silent on the earth for ever;
But amid the choir above,
With the angels she is singing
Of her Saviour's boundless love.

1866.

However we Try.[1]

HOWEVER we try to forget the past,
Its shadow comes back again;
The scent of a sweet geranium leaf
May sting with a sudden pain,
The sound of a voice, or the song of a bird,
Or the murmuring waves of the sea,
May melt into tears all the courage of years,
And bring back my sorrow to me!

However we try to believe and hope
That whatever is, must be best,
There are times when visions come back again
And give us no peace nor rest.
The first glad song of the bird in the spring,
Or the primrose that gladdens the lea,
May speak to the heart with a passionate tone,
And bring back my sorrow to me!

August 1866.

[1] With music.

'I trust Thee.'

I TRUST thee, I trust thee, or what could I do?
Though others betray me, yet thou wilt be true.
Remember, remember thy promise to me,
Wherever thou goest, where'er thou may'st be!

I know thee, I know thee, whate'er thou may'st say;
I too have a secret to treasure away.
Remember, remember our compact to-day,
Though others be faithless, we will not betray.

August 1866.

[1] With music.

Filey Rocks.

WITH A SKETCH COPIED FROM VARSA.

THERE is light upon the orange rocks at sunset,
There is light upon the silver of the sea;
The whole wide earth seems bathed in heaven's gladness,
And yet I think the darkness clings to me.

Why can I not arise and fling it from me?
Why can I not be fearless and be free?
For, in my heart I know that, past the shadows,
A silver day-star might arise for me.

1866.

Come back!

My heart cries out, Come back to me!
I think you love me yet;
Though parted we must ever be,
I dare you to forget!
All beauty felt in sight or soul
Speaks to my heart of thee,
And even in my dreams I call,
Come back, come back to me!

Come back to me, come back to me!
Why is your pride so great,
While both must suffer misery?
Come back ere 'tis too late!
I did not reason on my love,
When first I felt its powers;
It fell upon my thirsty heart
As rain falls on the flowers.

August 1866.

O Sea!

WITH COPY OF A SKETCH BY VARSA.

O SEA! O grand and solemn sea!
What strange sad thoughts thou bringest me!
How infinite thy mighty main,
How welcome to my heart again!
For thou alone, O restless sea,
Canst feel, in thy unrest, for me!
Thy ever-changing mood I know,
Thy never-ceasing ebb and flow;
None better can believe than I
The influence of each changing sky.
Not two short hours within the day
Has *one* mood ever perfect sway;
'Tis tears and smiles, and smiles and tears,
For ever, through unending years!
Yet, O great ocean, it may be,
One day a change will come for thee,

And greater peace shall be thine own
Than ever thy sad waves have known;
And oh, God grant that peace may be
Still shared, still understood, by me!

October 1867.

Unspoken Love.

LONG years have passed since last we met,
Long years that I would fain forget,
But they enchain and bind me yet!

I was too proud the truth to show,
And you too blind the truth to know,—
And so we parted long ago.

You spoke of life but as a dream,
My visions were your constant theme,—
How empty they would one day seem!

I was too proud the truth to show,
And you too blind the truth to know,—
And so we parted long ago!

October 1867.

After Long Days.

After long days of bitterness and pain,
And winter frost, and dull December snow,
I saw the little snowdrop once again,
And hope within my heart began to grow.
'For sure,' methought, 'the darkest day is past,
The early blooms of spring begin to wake.'
And in my heart a light doth shine at last;
I bid it welcome for the snowdrop's sake.

February 16, 1868.

Peace Hovers.

PEACE hovers, like an angel, on the vast and mighty deep,
Far o'er the ocean reaches, lying all in silver sleep;
Peace nestles 'midst the lovely fern, around the ivy-twine;
Peace dwelleth with the primroses that blossom in the chine.
She rests on every quiet cloud that saileth o'er the sky,
She breathes in every zephyr as it passeth quickly by;
And when the hush of eventide hath fallen on the sea,
I fain would think, I fain would hope, Christ whispers 'Peace' to me.

AT SHANKLIN, *April* 7, 1868.

The Last Night in the Old Home.[1]

A FRAGMENT.

. . . . . .

WHO can doubt, then, that around us, in perfection soon shall gather
Forms much brighter and more glorious, in the fields of golden light,—
In the never-ending summer born of heaven's unclouded weather,
In the faith-day home of gladness,—than we here have known by sight?

. . . . . .

February 19, 1867.

[1] With music.

Sonnet—A Christmas Rose.

A CHRISTMAS rose I gather you to-day,
A hardy flower that blossoms in the snow;
Its opening leaves I tended long ago,
And now the perfect flower I snatched away.
No rose without a thorn, the poets say,
Yet on *this* rose no rugged thorn can grow,—
This *Christmas* rose, that blessed angels know,
Who strip each thorn from off its charmèd spray.
Be fraught with healing, every tender leaf
That springs at Nature's will! for, all day long
No studied art a false luxuriance threw
Upon its growth, of nature's bloom the chief;
Some heaven-sent hope the sunlight of its song,
Some fount of holy tears its only dew.

BUCKLESBURY RECTORY, CHRISTMAS 1867.

While Sitting all Alone.

WHILE sitting all alone to-night,
The thoughts came thick and fast
Of many a bygone Christmas time,
Of merry years long past.
I hear the Christmas bells to-night,
As long ago they rung
In the silence of the starlight,
In the days when I was young.

O Christmas bells! right welcome is
The message that ye bear,
Wide open is the door for all
Who seek to enter there.
Whatever thy shortcomings,
If repentant thou wilt be,
The golden gates will open e'en
For such a one as thee.

We must believe that message,
And we must take heart again.
However dark the way may seem,
Our faith will make it plain.
And, while the bells are ringing,
Up above, 'mid realms of light,
The angels may be singing
In our Christmas songs to-night.

CHRISTMAS 1867.

'Twas Easter Eve.

'TWAS Easter Eve:—the sun set red and gold,
And bathed the hills and dales in orange light;
And as we walked, the joyous story old
Seemed all my own to comfort me to-night.
A message:—every wavelet seemed to bring it,
The fresh night-breezes murmured it to me;
Each bird, I fancied, seemed to sit and sing it;
And to my heart the whisper seemed to be,
'To-morrow's dawn should bring thy spirit gladness.
Away with dreary thoughts and earth-born fear!
A Christian should have little cause for sadness!
On this the gladdest night of all the year.'
This was the whisper,—in my heart I felt it;
Then did my spirit inwardly rejoice.
My heart of stone,—some joy stole in to melt it;
I *must* be glad—remembering that voice.

AT SHANKLIN, *Easter Eve*, 1868.

We Lingered by the Little Church.

We lingered by the little church,
  Whose walls so old and grey,
With many a wreath of ivy
  Were garlanded to-day.

Half hidden by the sheltering arms
  Of oak and fir it stood,
With many a primrose peeping in,
  From out the massive wood.

How peaceful seemed the quiet scene!
  How green each lowly sod
Which marked the quiet resting-place
  Of those at home with God!

No leaflet stirred, no sound was heard,
  And, lay the shadows cool

Unshaken, in the silent depths
Of quiet 'Bonchurch Pool.'

O blackbird, warble as thou wilt,
Thou canst not tell it all;
For, happiness was ours to hold,
That quiet evenfall!

BONCHURCH, *March* 21, 1868.

Come back.

THE primrose comes with infant face,
The daffodil with stately grace,
The thrush's song is loud and clear,
And joy returns, for April's here;—
While I alone seem waiting yet
Some hidden sorrow to forget.
The swallow has re-crossed the sea:
Then come back thou, fair Hope, to me!

The lilac buds are fresh and green,
The red tips on the larch are seen;
The snowdrops faded long ago,
When first a sunbeam kissed the snow.
Oh that my sorrow thus would fade!
Beneath its wings I live in shade.
The swallow has re-crossed the sea:
Then come back thou, fair Hope, to me!

March 1868.

There is Honey in every Rosebud.

THERE is honey in every rosebud,
For every wandering bee;
But sometimes I think in my sadness,
That life has no honey for me.

But then I am consciously sinning,—
My faith is but feeble to-night;
At the end we forget the beginning,
And at eventide it may be light.

Though with thorns all my pathway be crowded,
Though sorrow my portion may be,
Though others be walking in sunshine,
While the darkness still clingeth to me:

Yet when life and its sorrows are over,
A glorious light shall arise:
We do not its shining discover,—
Too bright for our sorrowful eyes!

OSTEND, *August* 21, 1868.

Bruges.[1]

A MOONLIGHT night, a cloudless sky, above the Flemish
town;—
On many a troubled heart to-night the stars were
looking down.
The belfry robed in silver stood,—we heard the sad,
sweet chimes,
In melancholy tones repeating tales of olden times.

Of days they sang when Flemish weavers fought with
sons of France,
And won the day all gloriously with bayonet and
lance;
And how it fell, the simple people found, in times of
old,
Within their church's walls displayed, six hundred
spurs of gold.

[1] With music.

All night they rang, all night they sang;—to *me* they seemed to speak!—
And oftentimes the ready tears were wet upon my cheek.
O bells of Bruges! to saddened hearts ring not of visions past,
But cheer the heavy-laden with the hope of rest at last.

OSTEND, 1868.

Song.

LISTEN what the sea sings—'Never, never more!'
This the song the sea sings, to the golden shore;
And it only speaketh of my grief and pain;
Never think it sootheth my poor heart, again.

Once I thought it whispered (melancholy sea!)
Dreams of happy spring-time, to my heart and me:
Now I only hear it whisper to the shore,
Those sad words repeating—'Never, never more!'

BRUSSELS, 1868.

Christmas Chimes.

I.

To-NIGHT, sweet bells,
When the wind compels
Your tones o'er the driven snow,
Ye will ring out a chime
For the Christmas time,
As ye rang long years ago.
No echoes fail
Of the well-known tale
That in olden times ye bore;
But for me each bell
Bears a sadder knell
Than ever was tolled before.

II.

When the stars shine down
On the dear old town,
I have loved so well and so long,
Perchance your chime

For the Christmas time
May blend with an angel's song;
For one dwells above
Who forgets not to love
Any more than we cease to remember,
And who recks of our tears
Through the troubled years,
Since we parted that sad December.

III.

Sweet silvery tones,
There are absent ones
Who will hear you on earth no more.
But methinks your chime
For the Christmas time
Will reach the heavenly shore,
When your anthem rolls
For the happy souls
Caught up to perfect rest;
Where, 'mid endless day,
Grace wipes away
All tears from the eyes of the blest.

Hallowe'en.

MOST hearths to-night are blazing bright,
The children's voices sing for joy;
For this, I ween, is Hallowe'en:
Bring out the tree, bring out the toy!
Hallowe'en, Hallowe'en!
For peasant and queen
There's rejoicing alike
In the sweet Hallowe'en!

But as for me, it may not be:
I laugh not, sing not, with the rest;
Yet I shall learn, and time will show,
Perchance, that grief and tears were best.
Hallowe'en, Hallowe'en!
For peasant and queen
There's rejoicing alike
In the sweet Hallowe'en!

O heart! believe, and cease to grieve;—
Thy tears are counted, every one.
God grant it be, each soul may see
A glad eternity begun!
Hallowe'en, Hallowe'en!
Both peasant and queen
Are waiting alike
For the New Hallowe'en!

AT BRUSSELS, *October* 31, 1868.

Kyrie Eleison.

On a bright September day,
Passing through a quiet street,
Heard I voices all the way,—
Children's voices clear and sweet.
By the church's open door
Wistfully I lingered long,
While my heart, all sad and sore,
Joined the children's holy song:
Kyrie Eleison,
Christe Eleison!

Comforted, I went my way,—
Richer for that simple strain;
Many a night and many a day,
Heard that melody again.
And, through years to come, I know
I *shall* hear it evermore,

As I heard it, soft and low,
By the church's open door:
Kyrie Eleison,
Christe Eleison!

October 1868.

The Christmas Angel.

THE Christmas stars were shining
'Mid the angels' song sublime,
And on earth the bells were ringing
For the joyful Christmas time;
When, among the white-robed angels,
Stood one fairer than the rest,
With a crown of holly on her head
And a cross upon her breast.

They sang with voices softer,—
'She hath lately left the earth,
See her blue eyes wide with wonder
At the glorious second birth!
Short was her earthly journey,
She hath won the better part,
She is blest in coming early,
For she comes a child in heart.

'Welcome, gentle Christmas angel,
With the cross upon thy breast!
Was it by faith or by thy works
That thou hast won thy rest?'
She answered, smiling brightly,
'I know not that at all,
But Christ, my Lord, He let me in;
I called—He heard me call!'

CHRISTMAS, 1868.

The Swallow's Message.

I HAVE a message, bonnie bird,
To send across the sea—
(Oh, long ago, with many a vow,
He pledged his faith to me!);
Oh, would that I could cross the wave
With wing as wild, as free!
Go tell my love that hearts at home
Have wearied for a word,
Since summer suns have come and gone
With thee, my bonnie bird.
But he, alas! he speaks no more:
We faint with hope deferred.

The Silent Night is falling.[1]

A FRAGMENT.

THE silent night is falling,
Silver-tinted by the moon;
The old yew tree and the ivy
Will be white and shapeless soon.
I hear the soft bells ringing
In the valley sweet and clear,
Like angel voices, singing
To its rest the dying year.

[1] With music.

The Postern Gate.[1]

THEY leave the hall of the castle tall,
The stately and princely pair;
He opens the door of the Postern Gate,
A stripling with flaxen hair.

A lady bright and her chosen knight
Ride forward with lightsome glee;
But the youth of grace, with his Saxon face,
Cares little the sight to see.

For the smiles she flung and the words she sung
Had lured him on to his fate;
And stern and keen were his looks, I ween,
As he opened the Postern Gate.

[1] The three last verses are added by H. R. Francis, Esq., the poem having been left unfinished. With music.

Twelve months are o'er, and the gate once more
Rolls back for a sadder train,
For the good knight sleeps on a distant shore:
Ah! when will he wake again?

And the flaxen hair of that stripling fair
Is cowled and tonsured now:
He dreams that the smart of a wounded heart
Can be healed by a monkish vow!

And the lady—ah me! can this be she
Who carolled so blithe of late?—
With hearse and plume to an early tomb
She is borne through the Postern Gate!

Lisbeth's Life.[1]

A FRAGMENT.

SPRING is here, with singing thrushes,
Bees that murmur on the wing;
Butterflies, like dancing may-blooms,
On the bluebells sit and sing.
Lisbeth opens wide the windows,
Breathes the hawthorn-scented air,
And her spirit leaps in gladness:
Thinks she, 'Life is very fair!'

Summer comes with circling swallows,
Crimson roses proudly bloom,
And a thousand garden flowerets
Send their fragrance through the room.
Lisbeth sits beside the window,
Dreaming in the summer air,
But a shadow clouds the sunshine,
And her heart is full of care.

[1] With music.

Autumn sees the swallows flitting,
And the reapers 'mid the corn;
Poppies scarlet, all a-growing,
Every seventh sheaf adorn.
Lisbeth's heart is aching strangely,
For the world she thought so glad
Has but tried and sorely wearied,
And hath left her spirit sad.

Winter comes with snow and holly,
Robins in the ivy dim
Join with loving adoration,
Warbling out their Christmas hymn.
Lisbeth now is calm and peaceful,
All life's bitterness is past;
In the promises of Christmas
She hath found her peace at last.

Serenade.[1]

A FRAGMENT.

It is the holy midnight hour,
The glow-worms vigil keep,
The crescent moon is faintly shining
O'er the flowers asleep.
While I linger near thy lattice
And its jasmine spray,
Fondly, love, I sing, to while
The dreary hours away.
Good-night, love! good-night, love!

Sleeps the sundew, sleeps the orchis,
Sleeps the lily pale,—
All asleep save this poor brooklet
Flowing down the vale.

[1] With music.

Yet I linger near thy lattice,
Dreaming, love, of thee:
Dost thou, darling, ere the morning,
Waft one thought to me?

. . . . . .

Have you forgotten quite?

HAVE you forgotten quite, love,
The lovely autumn days,
When we sat so still and calm, love,
On the sheaves of golden maize;
When the robins sang to cheer us,
And the ringdove's coos were clear,
And the poppies waved in the wind, love,
And the swallows circled near?

And have you forgotten quite, love,
The slender grassy blade
From which we drank the dew, love,
Beneath the chestnut's shade?
You helped the giddy bee, love,
From the clover at your feet,
For he could not mount to fly, love,
With his load of honey sweet.

And have you forgotten quite, love,
Those clouds we watched together,
All rosy and gold in a silver fold,
In the still, calm autumn weather?
Oh no! you remember well, love,
The charm of those autumn days;
And the thought of them lingers yet, love,
In the heart of these simple lays.

The Mountaineer's Wife.

SHE handed him down his alpenstock,
And followed her lad to the door:
Oh! why did her heart so wildly beat
As it never had beat before?

And he looked in her eyes with sad surprise
As the tears began to flow:
'What, never a verse of a song, sweet wife,
To gladden me ere I go?'

And when he had taken the mountain path,
And she heard his step no more,
She sat her down on the turf to weep
As she never had wept before.

At eventide, when the mountain-side
Was a-flush with a rosy glow,

With growing dread, 'I'll follow,' she said,
'Whatever the path he'll go.'

The pitiless snows they blocked her way;
She could hear her wild heart beat,
As she saw the wallet he used to wear
'Mid the snow-drifts at her feet.

The avalanche fell in the noon-day heat
And buried the hunter deep:
Unheeded the chamois may pass him now,
Nor waken him from his sleep.

The Rose of Erin.[1]

I SAW her first in golden hours,
With primrose stars appearin';
Oh, queen was she of all the flowers,
The lovely Rose of Erin!
Beneath the shade of Irish hills,
Their isles our colour wearin',
Where smiled the shamrock all the day,
There dwelt the Rose of Erin.

I saw her next in summer time,
With every charm endearin';
For she was in her girlhood's prime,
The lovely Rose of Erin!
We met beside the banks of Erne,
No thought of sorrow fearin';

[1] Set to music by Sir T. Benedict, and sung by Madame Patti. Translated into different languages.

Yet oft I thought her lily-pale,—
My lovely Rose of Erin!

Alas, my flower! On autumn's wave
To heaven her bark was steerin';
And I—no prayer of mine could save
My lovely Rose of Erin!
Ah, well-a-day! the angels came,
My heart's own garden nearin',
And took from earth, to bloom in heaven,
My lovely Rose of Erin!

Azure Wings.

A FRAGMENT.

SPORT amidst the crimson clover,
Butterfly of azure hue;
Sip the honey from the blossoms,
Drink the crystal drops of dew!

Tell me whence thou cam'st this morning;
Dwell'st thou in a bluebell fair?
For thou wear'st her own sweet colours,
Fairy floating child of air.

. . . . . .

I will listen, Love, for Thee.[1]

WHEN the nightingale is come, and the apple is in bloom,
When the rosy may is blushing on the tree,
And the cowslips in the grass scent the meadows as you pass,
I will listen, I will listen, love, for thee.

I shall hear thy step afar, where the reeds and rushes are,
By the margin of the silver-running stream;
And the babbling water clear will betray that thou art near,
As it ripples down the valley in a dream.

When the evening air is still, and the swallows fly at will,
In silence only broken by the bee;

[1] With music, in an original MS. book.

When the music by the stream seems to melt into
a dream,
I will listen, I will listen, love, for thee.

I will wreathe a garland there, with sweet lilies, for
thy hair,
And queen of all the woodland thou shalt be;
When the sunset gilds the trees, gently waving in the
breeze,
I will listen, I will listen, love, for thee.

The Early Violets.

A TEAR-DROP stood in the violet's eye,
As the cold March wind swept fiercely by;
It folded its leaves, of an emerald green,
To ward off the blast so cutting and keen,
Which bowed it to the ground.

One luckless floweret was thus exposed,
The rest of the buds were firmly closed;
But they knew that their loved companion sighed,
And at eve the purple favourite died,
And withered on its stem.

So the early violets passed away,
Nor blossomed again for many a day;
And the evening dew wept tears in vain,—
It could not revive those flowers again:
They bloomed and died in a day.

1857.

A Lincolnshire Marsh Stream.

AMONG the fens and marshes
I walked one summer day,
And marked the water blossoms
Which all around me lay.
The marsh pools thick with arrowhead
And pointed leaflets green,
And the little rosy plantain
Peeping daintily between.
The clusters on the burweeds
Were all in prickly balls,
And they made the little marsh stream
Divide in waterfalls.
The darling, bright forget-me-not
Crowned every bank with blue,
And the yellow spearwort and the mallow
Bloomed and flourished too.

I saw the reed canary grass,
And willow-herb as well,
The duckweed and the coltsfoot,
And the water pimpernel.
The golden-rod and flowering rush
And stately iris grew,
And lilac-striped sea lavender
And starwort met my view.
While dainty little dragon-flies
Skimmed gaily in the air,
And hovered o'er the marsh stream
To greet those flowerets fair.

1859.

There's a Silver Lining to every Cloud.[1]

THOUGH dark the clouds be, o'er our life,
We trust and fear no ill;
For has not every darkest cloud
Its silver lining still?

They say each rose has its hidden thorn,
Though fragrant and fair to sight;
But I love to think that the darkest cloud
Has its silvery lining white.

And though the hours seemed rosy once,
But now are changed to grey,
Oh, let us be brave and hopeful still,
For the shadow will pass away!

If we do but bend to the passing storm,
And combat our wayward will,

[1] With music.

We shall always find that the darkest cloud
Has a silvery lining still.

Though sad and drear our days may be,
A sunbeam shines through all,
If it do but rest on our hearts and minds,
As it rests on the cottage wall.

For the golden sunshine of the heart
Will drive away every ill,
And will make us *feel* that the darkest cloud
Has a silvery lining still.

White Lilacs.[1]

Near my window, I remember,
When I was a little child,
Brave white lilacs, all a-blowing,
Looked into my face and smiled.
Ever since those childish hours
Have I felt a vague content,
When the fragrant lilac flowers
Greet me with familiar scent.

Oh, what visions then I cherished,
As the lilacs rocked in glee!
And how soon their glory perished—
Perished with that lilac tree!
Yet I never quite forget them,—
Crystal castles in the air;
And I often half regret them,—
Sweet delusions that they were.

[1] With music.

In the spring, when birds are singing,
And the primrose stars appear,
When within my brain are ringing
Voices silent all the year;—
When the sudden tear-fount streaming
Comes and overmasters me,
Oft it happens I've been dreaming
Underneath a lilac tree.

What shall I see if ever I go? [1]

A FRAGMENT.

WHAT shall I see if ever I go
  Over the mountains high?
Now I can see but the peaks of snow
Crowning the cliffs where the pine trees grow,
  Striving to climb to the sky.

. . . . . .

[1] With music.

Die Hertz Blume.[1]

'There grew a little Flower.'

THERE grew a little flower,
That blossomed in a day;
And some said it would ever bloom,
And some, 'twould fade away;
And some said it was happiness,
And some said it was spring,
And some said it was grief and tears,
And many such a thing.
But still the little flower grew on,
And still it lived and throve,
And men do call it Summergrowth,
But angels call it 'Love.'

[1] With music.

The Hazel Dell.[1]

A FRAGMENT.

'TWAS many years ago, I met her,
A happy little child was she,
Her golden ringlets danced in the sun,
And her laughing eyes were fair to see.

They tell me now, this sweet wild rose
Has changed to a garden flower.

. . . . . .

[1] With musical notes.

I do not dream of telling Thee.[1]

I do not dream of telling thee
My heart is all thine own;
I do not care to sadden thee
With sorrow all unknown.
I would not have a word of mine
Enchain thy spirit free,
And so I keep my secret now,
And evermore, from thee.

[1] With music.

You'll come back.[1]

THE morning that you left us, every Irish heart was sad,
No spirit—niver a bit o' one—was left in any lad.
I send my thoughts by every wave across the troubled main:
You'll come back, won't you, darling, when the violets come again?

[1] With music.

Out on the Rocks.[1]

Do you remember it, darling, I wonder,—
Do you remember it, so long ago,—
All that we said as we strolled there together,
Out on the rocks when the tide was low?

What did I say, as we strolled there together?
What did you answer me, timid and slow?—
What did you promise me, do you remember,
Out on the rocks when the tide was low?

Never remember it—never remember it!
I have forgotten it, long, long ago.
I have forgiven it, only I think of it
Out on the rocks when the tide is low.

[1] With music.

Lilith Abei.

LULLABY, lullaby, Lilith abei!
Sleeping or waking, the angels are nigh.
Rest thee, my pretty one, rest until day—
Lullaby, lullaby, Lilith abei!
Over thy cradle thy mother will pray:
Sleeping or waking, the angels are nigh.

Ah, could such Joy be Mine![1]

To know that thou wert by my side,
To hear thy voice so dear,
And in thy sweet self to confide,—
No ill then could I fear.
And ever to thy gentle sway
My fate would I resign:
Alas! I can but dream, and say,
Ah, could such joy be mine!

[1] With music.

Merry May.[1]

'Tis like a tale of olden time,
Long, long ago:
The world was in its golden prime,
And Love was lord below;
Every vein of earth was dancing
With the spring's new wine;
'Twas the pleasant time of flowers
When I met you, love of mine.
And some spirit sure was straying
From heaven on that day,
When I met you, love, a-maying
In that merry, merry May.

I remember how thy fairy form
And golden hair
Were stamped upon my memory
When first I saw thee there.

[1] Left incomplete, the last verse added by E. F. With music.

I remember how I lingered
For thy parting smile
(I had dreamed of nought so beautiful,
And blessed thee all the while).
Oh, some spirit sure was straying
On our happy earth that day,
When I met thee, love, a-maying
In that merry, merry May.

We lost the lights of fairy-land,
Long, long ago;
But brighter beams of love and truth
Have blest our lives, we know.
Ev'ry grief we have divided,
Ev'ry joy twice told,
We have counted out together still,
And all in purest gold.
Oh, some angel sure was playing
On his harp to guide my way,
When I met thee, love, a-maying
In that happy, happy May!

Farewell to Mablethorpe.[1]

A FRAGMENT.

FAREWELL to thy banks and thy golden sands, Mablethorpe,
Sadly I bid thee farewell;
Adieu to thy bright blue waves, happy old Mablethorpe;
Mablethorpe, once more, farewell!

[1] With musical notes.

The Wild White Flower.

Upon the mountain-side
A wild white blossom grew,
'Twas warmed by early sunbeams,
And 'twas bathed by morning dew.
The streamlet trickled by,
Reluctant, to the vale;—
It would have lingered if it could,
Beside the floweret pale.

And when the fair full moon
Arose and shed her light,
A thousand sparkling dewdrops
Bedecked that blossom white.
And purely still it bloomed,
Through many a sunny day;
But falling snow came silently,
And took the flower away.

Once a Child.[1]

ONCE a child a rose espied,
Blooming in the wild-wood ;—
Blushing in the thicket side,
He the dainty bud descried,
With the greed of childhood.

Said the child, 'I like to break
Rosebud of the wild-wood.'
Rosebud answered, 'If you break,
I my own defence must make
Against the tricks of childhood.'

'Rosy, Rosy!' said the child,
Warning words unheeding,
'See, I break you!'—broke, and smiled;
But, the thorn his triumph spoiled—
Left with fingers bleeding!

[1] Left incomplete. The last verse added by E. F. With musical notes.

The White Waves are breaking.

THE white waves are breaking along the lone shore,
The breezes are blowing as fresh as of yore,
The blue skies are cloudless, no shadow appears;
But where are the voices we loved in those years?

The same things around us seem cruelly bright,
The same sun shines o'er us in colour and light;
But I am so saddened, it seems but to me
There's a heart-breaking tone in the sound of the sea.

And every wave, as it raises its head,
Seems to me like a hope of the days that are dead;
And when the wave breaks, as the proudest must do,
It seems like those hopes which were broken in two.

Constance's Song.[1]

Oh, look not back, lest memories awaken,
Mournful and deep as that lone sigh!
Peace may return when hope hath long forsaken;
Hearts may be calmed, and cruel sorrows die.

Oh, leave the past, lest thou, in dreams returning
Over thy path in that dim land,
Find there the oft-quenched fires still falsely burning,—
Streams painted bright on barren desert sands!

[1] With music.

Redcar.

We sat one happy evening by the sparkling, sunny sea,
And a wealth of wondrous beauty seemed to rise and comfort me:
A promise came upon the wave, of future rest from sin,
On that glad and golden evening when the tide was coming in.

Each wave that danced and sparkled brought a message from the sea,—
A happy, peaceful message from the ocean depths to me,—
A message that came surging to my heart through all their din,
On that glad and golden evening, when the tide was coming in.

'What matter, laughed the joyous waves, if crosses
should be thine?
All brighter in thy heavenly crown the jewels' light
shall shine.
A holier place amidst the blest thy spirit still may
win!'—
So the waves said, to my fancy, when the tide was
coming in.

'What, canst thou not believe, and give thy life to God
to keep?—
To God, who made our ocean and the wonders of its
deep?
Be hopeful to remember all the victory thou may'st
win!'—
So the waves said, on that evening, when the tide was
coming in.

The Blue Waves broke.[1]

THE blue waves broke on the silver sands
At the close of a summer's day,
And a maiden sat with her claspèd hands,
A-watching the dancing spray.
And she breathed a lay to the listening waves,
That re-echoed the rocks among,
And her sweet voice thrilled through the wild sea caves,
And this was the song she sung:—
'Sweet waves, I pray, your powers restrain,
Bear my love to his home again,—
Safe back to the home that he loves the best,—
Safe back to me!'

The warbled prayer of the simple maid
Was poured to the rolling wave,

[1] Left incomplete. The second verse added by E. F.

But Heaven the distant tempest stayed,
And pitying answer gave.
A sail on the far horizon shone
With the first pale gleam of the moon,
And the lad whose heart had been hers alone
Had her troth ere the morrow's noon.
The waves had borne him over the main,
Back to the love that he loved the best;
Gently back to his love again,
Hers still to be.

A Spring Carol.

It is spring-time, and the chestnuts
Wear their leaves of freshest green,
Golden-tinted by the sunbeams,
Dancing every leaf between.
Let us leave our books, and wander,—
To the woodland let us come,—
For the apple trees are budding,
And the lilies are in bloom.

Every field is white with daisies,
Every bank with violets gay,
Thick as stars the primrose blossoms
Softly scattered on our way.
The little brook is babbling,
And all the wild birds sing:
Oh, let us join the chorus
From our hearts,—and welcome spring!

There is a Song.[1]

THERE is a song so thrilling,
All other songs excelling,
That they who sing it, sing it oft again.
No mortal did invent it,
But God by angels sent it,
So deep and quiet, yet so sweet and plain.

The love which it revealeth
All earthly sorrows healeth,—
They flee like mists before the break of day.
When, O my soul! thou learnest
That song of songs in earnest,
Thy cares and troubles all shall pass away.

[1] With music.

Oh, Mary, I must Sail to-night.

Oh, Mary! I must sail to-night,
At sunset, o'er the sea;
Say, when I'm gone, my only love,
Wilt thou remember me?
I know that many a worthier one
May tell his love to thee;
But oh! my love, my only love,
Wilt thou remember me?

And when the moon sends forth her rays
Of silver o'er the sea,
Oh, Mary! wilt thou watch her beams,
And still remember me?
And when the stars come one by one,
So bright and fair to see,
Oh! then, my love, my only love,
Wilt thou remember me?

By the Blue Alsatian Mountains.[1]

By the blue Alsatian mountains
Dwelt a maiden young and fair;
Like the careless flowing fountains
Were the ripples of her hair.
Angel-mild her eyes so winning,
Angel-bright her happy smile,
When, beneath the lindens spinning,
You could hear her song the while,—
Adè, Adè, Adè!
Such songs will pass away,
Though the blue Alsatian mountains
Seem to watch and wait alway.

By the blue Alsatian mountains
Came a stranger in the spring,
And he lingered by the fountains,
Just to hear the maiden sing;

[1] With music.

Just to whisper in the moonlight
Words the sweetest she had known;
Just to charm the sultry noonlight
Till her heart was all his own.
Adè, Adè, Adè!
Such songs will pass away,
Though the blue Alsatian mountains
Seem to watch and wait alway.

By the blue Alsatian mountains
Many spring-times bloomed and past,
And the maiden by the fountains
Lost her treasured hope at last;
Then she withered like a blossom
Vainly pining for the rain:
She will never see the stranger
Where the fountains fall again!
Adè, Adè, Adè!
Such songs will pass away,
Though the blue Alsatian mountains
Seem to wait and watch alway.

The Morning Ride.

How bright the dawn
Of a summer's morn,
The wild birds warbling clear!
The babbling brook
In the shady nook
Is wooing the speedwell near.
Then ho! my steed, for a morning ride;
And over the moor and heather,
For a dear one's smile full many a mile
We'll trample the heath together.

She's there, I trow,
She awaits us now;
At her lattice betimes is she,
In her white robe fair,
With a rose in her hair,
Fresh gathered to give to me.

Then ho! my steed, for a morning ride;
And over the moor and heather,
For a dear one's smile full many a mile
We'll trample the heath together.

Then shake thy mane
To the winds again,
And carry me swift away
To the green hill's side,
Where dwelleth my bride,
Who will welcome us both to-day.
Then ho! my steed, for a morning ride;
And over the moor and heather,
For a dear one's smile full many a mile
We'll trample the heath together.

Oh, were I the Rain!

OH! were I the rain, I would quietly fall
On the breadth of the earth for the flowerets all;
They should brightly blossom and warmly glow,
So fresh in the spring-time from under the snow.

Oh! were I the sun, I would lovingly shine
On the restless waves of the ocean brine;
They should dance for gladness, and break in smiles,
And kiss the sands of the sea-girt isles.

Alas! my heart, it is sad and lone,
For the lightsome days with their mirth are gone,
And it seemeth to me nor sun nor rain
Can bring us those halcyon hours again.

The Old Pink Thorn.[1]

SINCE the days of happy childhood,
I've loved its grateful shade,
I welcomed ev'ry blossom,
And mourned to see them fade.
How often have I stood beneath
Its boughs at early morn,
And listened to the merry bees
About the old pink thorn!

And later, when we loved to dance
Upon the village green,
I mind me how the merry maidens
Chose me for their queen.
A rosy wreath they wove for me:
How gaily was it worn!
I loved the garland made for me
From off the old pink thorn.

[1] With music.

Then tell me not 'tis old and frail,
I could not spare it now;
I prize each tender leaf and flower,
I know each knotted bough.
For happy mem'ries of the past
Its ev'ry leaf adorn:
Take all the fairest trees away,
But spare the old pink thorn.

And later still, I stood with one
I loved, and who loved me;
We always met at sundown
'Neath this old and friendly tree.
'Tis long ago,—'tis past and gone,—
But I must ever mourn
For him whose words of love I heard
Beneath the old pink thorn.

We met there, and we parted there,
And ne'er to meet again:
He was among the first to fall
Upon the battle-plain.

Oh! very sad at heart was I,
When, weary and forlorn,
I came to weep those bitter tears
Beneath the old pink thorn.

Farewell to Mary Stuart.

SET TO THE MUSIC OF A GONDOLIER'S SONG.

FAREWELL! farewell! our rose and queen,
We bear thee o'er the wave
From all who love thee best, I ween,
The loyal and the brave.

The lights of Calais shine no more,
And stranger cliffs there be;
Sad hearts are on the shore to-night,
And sadder on the sea.[1]

[1] The two concluding lines are a quotation (with permission) from Major Whyte Melville, for whose poem (or song) called 'Farewell' these two verses seem to have been written as an addenda. But the quotation is not entire, the concluding words in each line being changed.

Throw wide the Lattice Window.

THROW wide the lattice window,
But mind the climbing rose,
That, glistening bright with dewdrops,
Its blushing beauty shows.
Break through the silver gossamer,
That weaves a fairy chain,
And listen to the band of birds;
For spring has come again.

Throw wide the lattice window,
But mind the little nest,
That, hidden 'mid the roses,
The wood-bird loves the best.
At early dawn you'll listen,
And hear her blithely sing
A carol to the morning,
And a welcome to the spring.

The Willow Tree, Bute House, Kensington.

Oh, willow, weeping willow tree!
Say, weepest thou, old friend, for me?
Are all thy silver tears of dew
For griefs of mine, for ever new?
Or, when the sunbeams sport with thee,
Are all those fleeting smiles for me?
Oh, willow tree, sad willow tree,
Are all thy tears and smiles for me?

Oh, willow, weeping willow tree!
Some day those tears will fall for me.
When all my tears are wept and past,
And peace and rest are mine at last,
When, after trouble, grief, and pain,
The crooked paths are straight again,—
Say, *must* thou mourn the loss of me?
Oh, willow, weeping willow tree!

Yes, years will come and years will go,
And still those fancied tears will flow,
And thou wilt weep in pity still
For every earth-born woe and ill.
As long as this world's sway shall last,
Till all the vague unrest is past,
The angels looking down to thee,
Shall see thee weeping, willow tree.

In Port at last.

I SAT on the drear sand musing;
The sun was low in the west;
All flashing in gold and crimson,
He royally sought his rest;
And many boats were sailing,
All bound for the harbour bar;—
They were but specks in the distance,
When first I saw them afar.

And the boats came nearer and nearer,—
Some sailed in the golden light,
While others stole on in shadow,
Their hulls as black as night.
But I gazed with a yearning greater
At those on their darkened way,
For their path was sad and lonely,
While others were glad and gay.

The dark boats sailed on slowly,
  Cheered by no sunbeam bright;
The rest, on the selfsame journey,
  Were floating in golden light.
But it mattered not;—I lingered,
  And watched till the surf was past:
The sad, the gay, and the golden
  All entered the port at last.

The Lily of St. Goar.[1]

By the ever flowing river,
Where those vineyards grace the shore,
'Neath the shadow of the mountains
Dwelt the Lily of St. Goar.
For her goodness and her beauty
Famed in many a poet's lay,
Many brave hearts sought to win her,
But *her* heart was far away.
On the distant field of battle,
There was one whose standard bore
For its badge a snow-white lily,
'Neath the banner of St. Goar.

Time went on, and still no tidings
Save of bloodshed and of war;
Paler grew the maiden daily;
Drooped the Lily of St. Goar.

[1] With music.

Watching from her lattice window
All the weary summer through,
With her blue eyes tear-beclouded,
Like to corn-flower wet with dew.
Autumn tints were on the mountains,
Still she waited as before;
But they whispered, 'Hope is over
For the Lily of St. Goar.'

On the battle-field they found him,
And his hand the standard bore,—
For its badge a snow-white lily,
'Neath the banner of St. Goar.
And she ceased her weary weeping,
Watched nor waited as before;
In her blue eyes shone a lustre,
As in happy days of yore.
'For,' she cried, 'my heart is breaking;
Soon we meet to part no more.'
Truly spake she; in the morning
Slept the Lily of St. Goar.

I Remember it.[1]

'TWAS a still soft eve in summer,
And the west wind sighed o'er the lea,
And the linnet shook the dew from the ivy, as he flew
To his nest in the old thorn tree.
The white rose clung to the lattice,
So heavy at the heart with dew,
And stars were alight in the heavens on that night,
Brightening the far pale blue.
I remember it,
I remember it.

The old grey spire looked taller
In the shadowy evening light,
And I thought it seemed to be pointing heavenward to me,
As I watched all alone that night.

[1] With music.

The white rose wept to the west wind,
So heavy at the heart with dew,
And o'er the moonlit trees murmured low the lulling breeze,
Wandering the woodlands through.
I remember it,
I remember it.

Half-mast high.

WITH silver gleam the moon's soft beam
Fell on the sleeping wave,
Yet o'er the main there seemed to reign
The stillness of the grave.
Each fishing boat seemed scarce afloat;
Dark ships were anchored nigh;
On one alone the moonbeams shone,
Whose flag was *half-mast high.*

And then I knew, while stars were few,
The angel had come down,
And o'er some brow, all peaceful now,
Had held the immortal crown.
'His race is run, his voyage is done!'
I could not choose but sigh.
Sad tears would flow if some could know
That flag was *half-mast high.*

Shine on, fair moon, and set not soon;
Look down, ye golden stars,
And shed your light on souls to-night
That feel their prison bars.
For that glad soul who sees the goal,
The heavenly haven, nigh,
We will not weep, though on the deep
A flag rides *half-mast high.*

Down the Stream.

DOWN the river we went rowing,
When the trees were white with may,
Where forget-me-nots were growing,
Making glad the river's way.
Bent the reeds and rocked the rushes,
As the wavelets fled to shore;
Blackbirds sang in hawthorn bushes,
Swallows skimmed the river o'er.
Gliding past the scented meadows,
All was pleasant as a dream;
Faintly fell the aspen shadows,
As we floated down the stream.

Gliding by the waving rushes,
Silence had been wise and well,
But the birds and hawthorn bushes
All seemed urging me to tell.

So 'twas whispered on the river,
And I blessed its silver flow,
For, her lips' uncertain quiver
Told me all I craved to know.
And when *I* had told my story,
Came enchantment's golden gleam,
Bathing all around in glory
As we floated down the stream.

Ah! methinks, thou merry May-time,
I shall trust thee ne'er again,
For it seems that in thy play-time
Thou may'st break a heart in twain.
Cruel flowers and thrushes feathered!—
Long ago that vision fled;
Seven times now the thorns have withered
Since those foolish words were said.
And I sometimes hate the river,
When I see its silver gleam,
For its waters brought me never
What was promised on its stream.

The Old Water Mill.

I STAND by the stile I remember so well,
And I look on the old home again;
Unaltered in beauty, and just as they were,
The house and the garden remain.
The perfume of clover is faint in the air,
The night is so sweet and so still,
And nought to be heard save that one singing bird
And the wheel of the old water mill.

The silver bells chime from the beautiful spire,
And wake me again from my dream,
And merry to me shall the waterbreaks be,
And merry the fish in the stream.
I will rouse me again for the battle of life,
And bid my heart's longings be still;
Why be tempted to yearn for what cannot return,
By the wheel of the old water mill?

The Day of Rest.[1]

THE week is over, and to-day
Once more we meet to praise and pray;
Once more a peace, a holy calm,
Falls on our troubled hearts like balm.

For in the week sure few can say
No shadow fell across their way;
And to some lives how doubly blest
The quiet of this Day of Rest!

In this day's calm my soul shall seek
A staff to lean on through the week;
And, may each Sunday prove the best,
Till dawns the eternal Day of Rest!

[1] With music.

If Joy be Mine.[1]

If joy be mine, my Saviour,
Oh, let me still beware,
And stedfast keep my praises,
And stedfast keep my prayer!
I know that nothing earthly
Should hold my heart below;
So help me, gracious Saviour,
Thy love and peace to know.

And let me still remember,
Whate'er the joy may be,
It cannot, must not, bind me,
Or loose my hold on Thee.
Be near me, ever near me,
In joy as well as pain,
And hear me, ever hear me,
Lest I grow cold again.

[1] With music.

When Weary-hearted.[1]

When weary-hearted and alone,
With none to comfort me,
Lord, give me strength my cross to bear,
Whate'er that cross may be!

Should friends forsake, and from their loss
The world seem bleak to me,
Oh, give me strength my cross to bear,
Whate'er that cross may be!

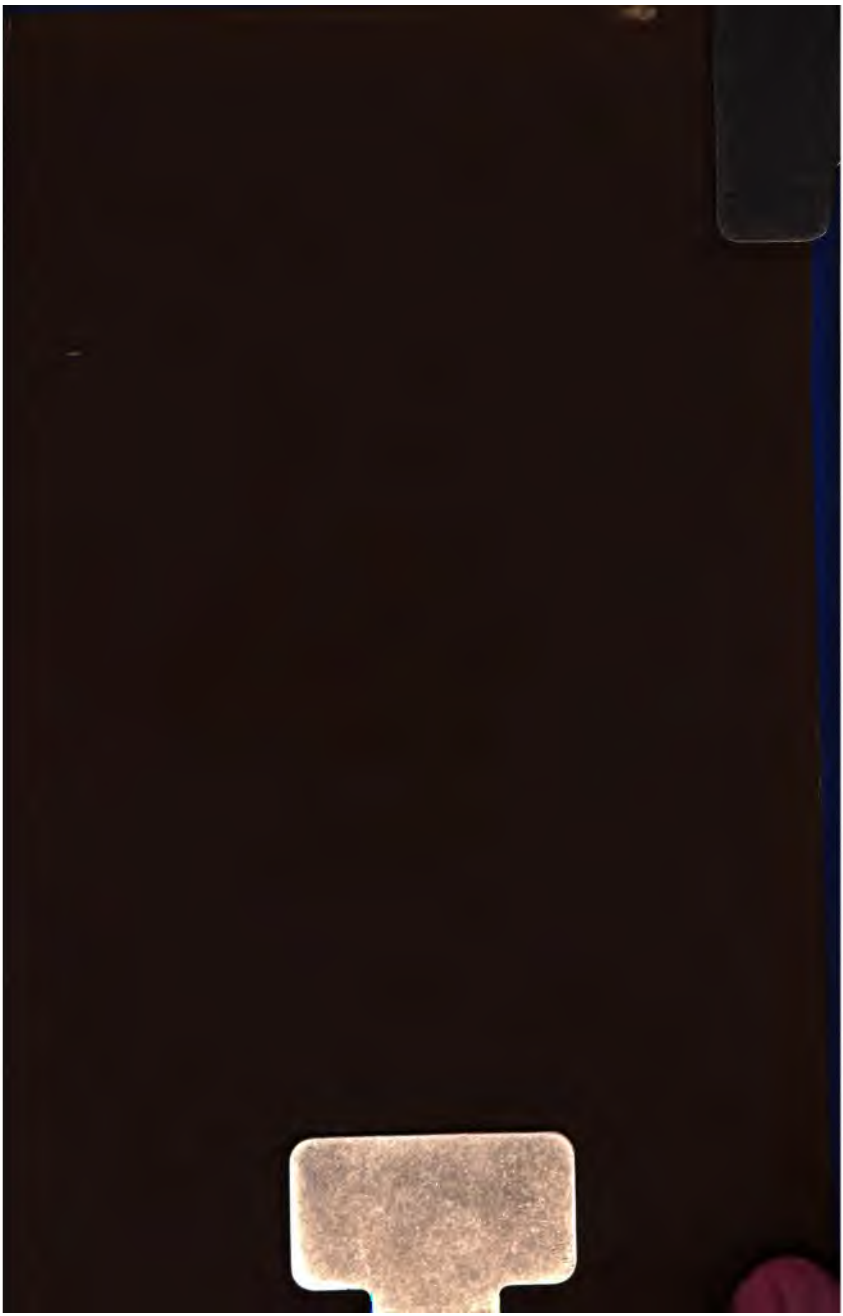
Or should my spirit seek in vain
For earthly sympathy,
Oh, give me strength my cross to bear,
Whate'er that cross may be!

[1] With music.

For when Thou bid'st me lay it down,
Forgotten, tears will be:
Oh, may the angels meet me then,
And bear my soul to Thee!

Where He would Lead.

Not by flowery meads in summer,
Nor by brooks' refreshing flow,
Not by paths where falls the sunshine,
Would I lead, and wouldst thou go.

Not by sweet refreshing fountains
Where the breezes whisper low,
Not by mere, or purple mountains,
Would I lead, and wouldst thou go.

But by thorny ways and weary,
Where the world hath rarely trod,
I would lead thee, for I love thee,
Through the wilderness to God.